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China

C H I N A T O U R I S M

ODYSSEY ALONG THE BLACK DRAGON RIVER

REVISITING THE SILK ROAD
QINGDAO'S GERMAN BUILDINGS



273

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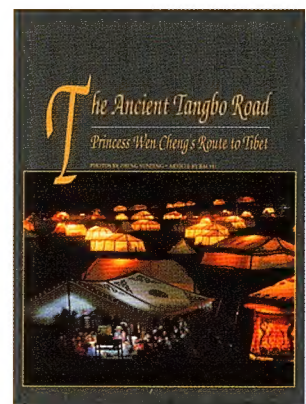
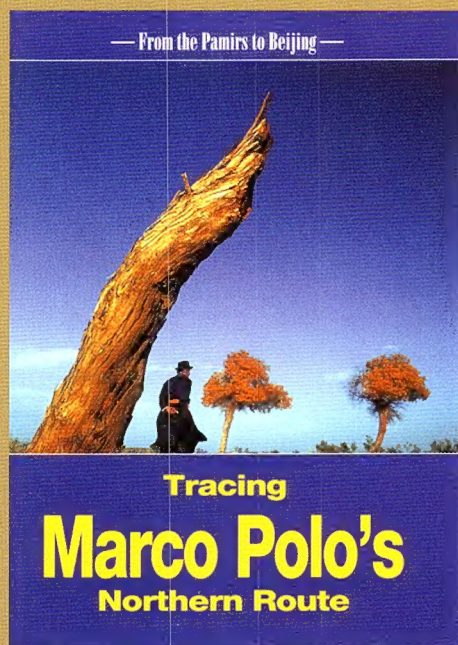
Photographic & Practical Guides for Your China Tours

Before you set off for your perfect journey, you may have to prepare your itinerary carefully. Each of the following recommended readings offers different types of information which cater to our readers' various interests: exploring, photography, or tourist information. They will be great guides to your China tours.

Tracing Marco Polo's Northern Route

A record of an 80-day journey in which our authors drive their jeep 12,000 km long through the northern regions of China following in the footsteps of Marco Polo's historic journey from the Pamir Highland to Beijing. In a medley of images and words, we present you with the fascinating scenery and various ways of life in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, and Tibet.

HK\$156



The Ancient Tangbo Road

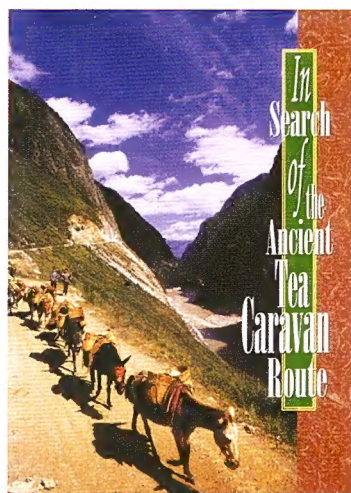
Covering four provinces including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, and the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ancient Tangbo Road was created on the map when Princess Wen Cheng was sent as a bride to Luoxie (present-day Lhasa) during the Tang Dynasty. Our photographers and writers, who have followed this arduous route, present you the graceful sights and unique ethnic customs on the way.

HK\$192

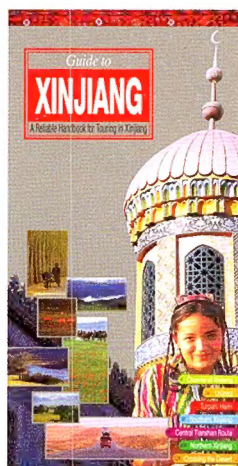
In Search of the Ancient Tea Caravan Route

The ancient Tea Caravan Route can be traced back to 2,000 years ago, starting from Xishuangbanna at China's southwestern end, passing through boundless forests and valleys to the Sino-Indian, Nepalese and Sikkimese borders on Tibet, the "Roof of the World".

This book is not-to-be-missed by every daring adventurer.



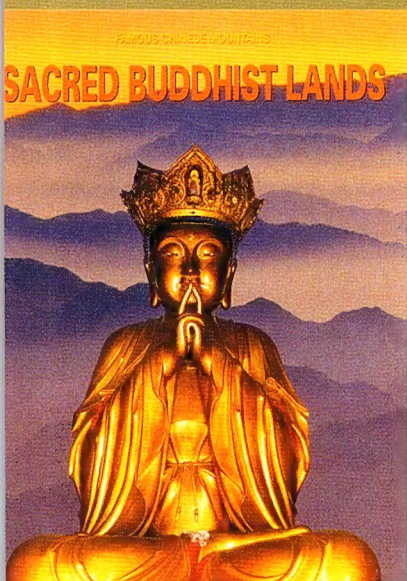
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Guide to Xinjiang

This book is especially designated for DIY travellers who desire to explore the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. There are detailed introduction to scenic spots in five main areas in Xinjiang including Ürümqi, Turpan, Southern and Northern Xinjiang, and Central Tianshan. Practical tourist information on accommodation, ticketing, shopping, local specialty, as well as travel tips are covered.

HK\$96



Sacred Buddhist Lands

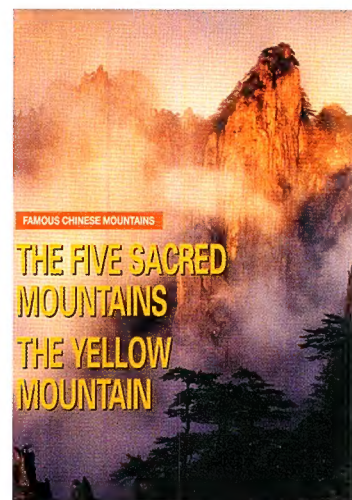
Buddhism in China is inevitably linked with some of the country's best known mountains. And going deep in the mountains and far away from civilization is an ideal place for retreat. Belonging to the four Bodhisattvas respectively, the four most famous Buddhist mountains — Wutai, Jiuhua, Putuo and Emei — are nestled with numerous monasteries and nunneries which have been worshipped by pilgrims for thousands of years. Tourists to these places will totally be soaked in "Kingdoms of Buddhism".

HK\$156

The Five Sacred Mountains The Yellow Mountain

Located in five provinces in China, every of the Five Sacred Mountains — Taishan, Hengshan, Songshan, Hengshan and Huashan — has its magnificent natural and cultural landscapes. Besides, Huangshan (Yellow Mountain), is also famous for its spectacular rocks, pine trees, and sea of clouds. It will be a great enjoyment in reading both the detailed text and remarkable images by our experienced photographers as recorded in this book.

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An Odyssey from North to East Following the Heilongjiang

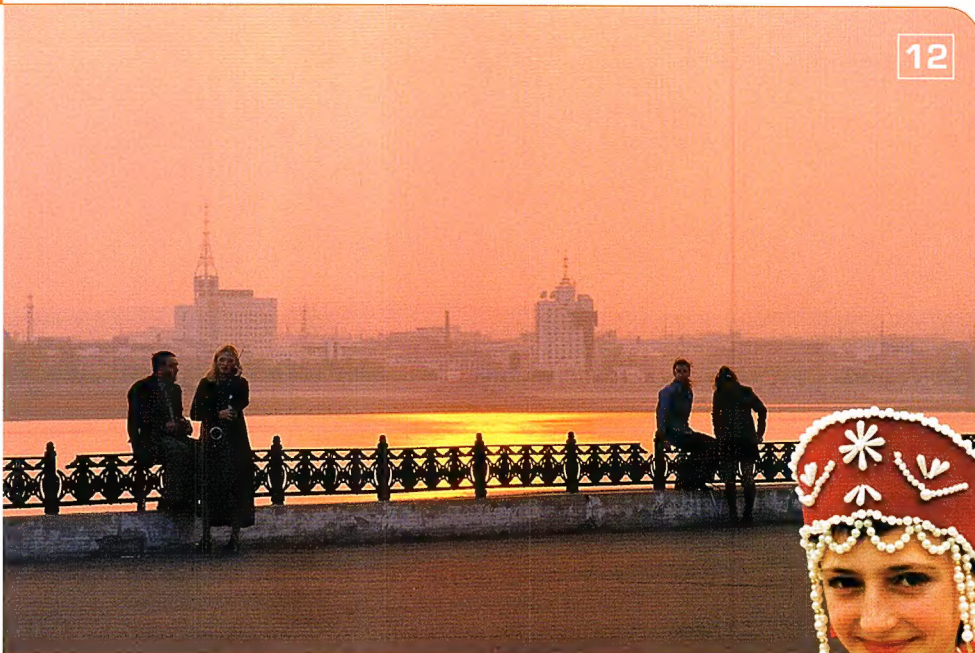
Photos by Huang Yanhong, Liu Xiangyang, Tan Jingtao, Du Dianwen, & others Article by Huang Yanhong

The third largest river in China, the Heilongjiang (Black Dragon River) which passes through cities located at the northernmost and easternmost of China — Mohe and Fuyuan — joins the Wusuli River and then flows into Russia. Our correspondent travels from the North Pole Village in Mohe to boundary Russian cities such as Charbarovsk and Blagovescensk. All these places along the river have witnessed the vicissitudes of the area's history as well as the love-hate relationship between China and Russia.

41 Traveller's Corner

Beyond the Yanmenguan Pass

Photos & article by Ren Shuyin



42 City Snaps

Past and Present of Qingdao's Old Buildings

Photos & article by Ning Luqiang

Qingdao, a coastal city of Northeast China's Shandong Province occupied by Germany in 1897, had been marked out into a European city proper, a villa area, a Chinese commercial district, and two residential areas. Hence it was known as a miniature Germany. Nowadays, the western buildings in Qingdao attract not only tourists and missionaries, but also architecture specialists from Europe and nostalgic Germans.

50 Discoveries

In Search of Old Roofed Bridges

Photos by Xiao Yunji Article by Zhang Qin

The name of "roofed bridges" became famous thanks to the US movie "The Bridges of Madison County". In fact, this kind of bridges can be widely seen in the suburbs of China's Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, in which local Chinese call them "wind and rain bridges". During one rainy and misty May, the writer and photographer drove through the deep valleys along the border of the two provinces in search of 200-plus covered bridges.

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Funny Lee Shun Yan

Article by Dianna Lau

English Edition

China

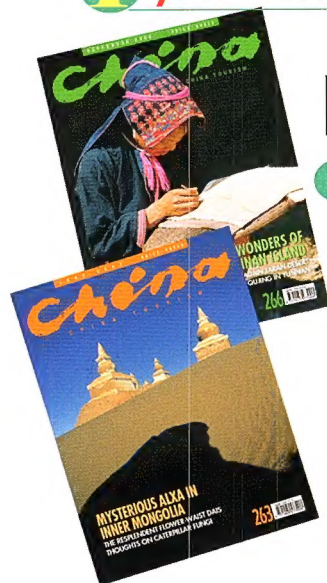
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Photos by Samuel Hung Article by Kit Chu

64 On the Way The Silk Road Revisited — After 20 Years

Photos & article by Ma Yiu Chun

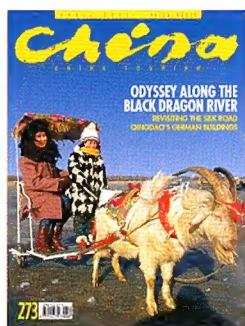


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72 Culinary Delights Culture a Special Ingredient: Six Noted Ethnic Restaurants in Beijing

Photos by Li Youxiang Article by Zhao Yu, Li Youxiang

In the past few years, the arrival of a series of restaurants with distinctive regional cuisines have brightened the Beijing food scene. They serve a variety of special flavours including those from the Kangba region on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Inner Mongolia, South China's Hakka community and West China's Guizhou. Brilliant folk music and dance performances even perfect the dining atmosphere, making you reluctant to leave.



A happy sleigh-ride on the iced Heilongjiang
(by Xie Guanghui)



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78 Bed & Board An Economic Budget — the Youth Hostels in China

Photos & article by Dianna

With the first International Youth Hostel introduced to Guangdong Province in 1988, DIY travel has become popular though the mainland. In fact, staying in youth hostels can help you to save a large amount of accommodation fees as well as find companions on the way more easily.

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Students in Blagovescensk
Photo by Huang Yanhong



FROM THE EDITOR

Frontier Odysseys

Great rivers shape more than just the landscapes they flow through. The stuff of songs and legends, they influence the everyday lives, culture, history and souls of the communities along their banks. The mighty Heilongjiang (Black Dragon River) in China's northeast is no exception. Flowing north to east for 4,730 km, it passes both the northernmost and easternmost points of China.

Its middle reaches form the frontier between China and its neighbour Russia. For our writer, following the Heilongjiang and shuttling between the sights of both countries on opposite riverbanks, was something of a personal odyssey on behalf of his father who loved Russia but was prevented from revisiting it. The river has been silent witness to centuries of vicissitudes in the Sino-Russian relationship — from invasions to acts of heroism. Fires and floods have also taken their toll on the region. Business is brisk today across the river and our writer is charmed by the exoticness of the Russian cities he visits. But he also encounters an unpleasant reminder in one such city that friction between the peoples can still flare up and he makes a plea for greater sensitivity.

He is disturbed too by the environmental degradation he sees. The health of the Heilongjiang is suspect, plagued by pollution and low water levels. And to his dismay, the wide expanses of the region's renowned Sanjiang Wetland are shrinking due to ill-considered reclamation.

In another kind of odyssey, "On The Way" travels to China's northwest frontier. Our writer had waited years to see the famous Xinjiang beauty spot, Lake Kanas, finally assembling family and old friends for the expedition. The stunning natural wonder lived up to expectations, but excessive entry charges and visual pollution in the form of ugly lakeside development proved a turn-off. Finding the same mess at Lake Sayam, he poses the question: "Is it inevitable for open scenic areas to be polluted?" The Lake Kanas authorities are fixing the problem; many other guardians of scenic attractions should take note before they kill the goose that lays the golden egg.

Happy travels.

Hainan Province to Speed Up Forestry

In the next three years, China will invest over 3.5 billion yuan in Hainan Province to return farmland to forests, to increase 180,000 hectares of forests on the island.

Afforestation will start in Hainan's central mountainous areas that have suffered severe soil erosion as well as western and coastal areas gradually being swallowed by desertification.

According to the plan, about 66,667 hectares of fragile farm land in Hainan are expected to be converted to forests this year, which will boost the provincial forest coverage from the current 53.3~ 58.5 percent. Farmers who formerly relied on the farmland will receive compensation of 20 yuan and 150 kg of grain in living subsidies for each *mu* (0.067 hectare) of forests they restore. The compensation period will last from five to eight years depending on the different tree species planted.



Kiev Carrier Theme Park Underway in Tianjin

North China's Tianjin City has started the work on a carrier theme park which will feature a retired Kiev Ukrainian carrier since early March. It is expected to serve as China's largest defense education and oceanic sciences education base.

Land-based construction would cover an area of 160,000 sq m, including business facilities, parking lots, theme sculpture and a street featuring architecture styles from around the world.

The Kiev carrier is scheduled to debut in the park in September 2003. The retired ship, 274 metres long, 52 metres wide and 51 metres high, was the first of the former U.S.S.R.'s Kiev-type carriers, which was bought by the Tianma Ship Dismantling Company of Tianjin in 2000.



Wildlife Breeding Centre Opens in Shaanxi

The Qinling Mountain Range Wildlife Breeding Centre has been set up in Foping County in northwestern Shaanxi Province.

The centre, to cover an area of five hectares, will be built at a total cost of more than 985,000 yuan, adding that 1,834 sq m of floor space has already been built for farming and wildlife shelters.

The breeding centre will be a comprehensive development project featuring animal husbandry, hunting, breeding, researches and observation. It will mainly breed and raise wildlife such as masked civet, the black bear, roe deer, boar, deer and giant salamanders.

Three Big Rivers to Be Set with Nature Reserves

China plans to set up a huge nature reserve in a bid to protect the sources of its three major rivers-the two longest, the Yangtse and Yellow rivers, and the Lancang River in Xining, capital of northwestern Qinghai Province.

Covering some 152,300 sq km, the move was designed to curb land degradation in the area, and protect the endangered wildlife, biodiversity and ecology.

The sources of the Yangtse, Yellow and Lancang rivers are all located in vast Qinghai province, in an area covering 318,000 sq km. The environment in this region has deteriorated in the past four decades due to prolonged drought, excessive farming and overgrazing, resulting in depleted lakes and wetlands, soil erosion, and a drastic drop in the endangered wildlife populations.

The proposed reserve will comprise six areas, including the river sources, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and virgin forests and vegetation along these rivers. Animal farming would be restricted to a 31,200 sq km area within the reserve, and substantial efforts would be made to restore vegetation in some areas, and conserve wetlands and wildlife habitats. Moreover, intensive drives would be launched to check forest and grassland fires, improve the awareness of locals concerning environmental protection and promote community development. The whole project would cost a combined investment of 2.52 billion yuan.

Folk Art Centre in Beijing to Be Renovated

Located in the southern part of the city, Tianqiao (Heavenly Bridge) currently under construction in southern Beijing, will change into a new face very soon. First built during the Yuan Dynasty (1271—1368) and became a centre of Chinese folk art at the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644—1911), Tianqiao is still believed to be the typical site of Beijing's culture by writers, artists and overseas Chinese who have come back over the years to seek their ancestral roots.

The construction of the rectangular, 5,000-square-metre citizens' square in Tianqiao started on mid December, 2002, to revive the folk art centre. According to historians, folk art performed at Tianqiao in the early 20th century were modern forms of some ancient religious rituals and the prototype of Beijing's culture and entertainment market. The street also gave birth to many artistic forms including ballad singing and acrobatics.

On the eastern end of the square will stand a bell tower-a onetime landmark in the area, and on the western end, a fountain and a group of statues. The square will provide a retreat for passersby with its lawns, trees and benches. It also features an underground parking lot, a department store showcasing Beijing's folk art and a cultural heritage museum.

Shanghai to Extend Subway Service

Lately, Shanghai is planning to speed up construction of its subway system during the next five years, extending the track of its downtown transport network to 300 km.

It can be foreseen that subways would become an important part of Shanghai's public transportation and an irreplaceable means of transport for local residents.

There are now only 65 km of subway serving the 6,340.5 sq km and 16.74 million people of Shanghai, which has become a cultural corridor dotted with celebrity quotations and beautiful frescos.



Snoopy Park to Open in July

A Snoopy theme park will open to the public in Shunde, Guangdong Province, in this July. Occupying an area of 40,000 sq m, it will become the first Snoopy theme park on the mainland, as well as the of biggest in the world. The construction has cost more than 100 million yuan.

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Tips for DIY Travelling in Kunming

Yunnan Kunming, known as the "spring city", is one of the most favourable places of DIY travellers. The followings are some practical tips:

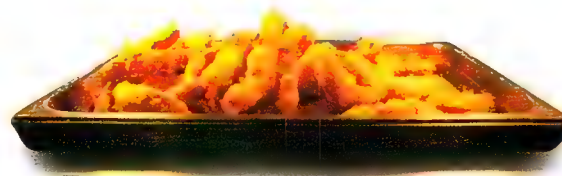
To Shilin (Stone Forest): Besides purchasing return tickets within one day at the Zhongbei Passenger Transport Station located on Beijing Road and Yongping Road (Shilin: 30 yuan; Jiuxiang: 35 yuan), you can consider taking a train. There is a special tourist train departing at 8:10 a.m. from the Kunming stop to Shilin. Single trip: 20 yuan (better to buy the ticket one day in advance). The train arrives Shilin exactly at 9:46 a.m. The return train departs at 4:32 p.m. Strange stones can immediately be seen after getting off the train. Then, take a little horse cart to Shilin Town. Fare: 2 yuan. Recommended hotel: 75 yuan/ day. In the morning, you can take a tri-leg motorbike to Gushilin (Ancient Stone Forest). Fare: 5 yuan. Admission: 25 yuan.

By the way, you can join local tours organised by the train. One-day tour: The tour includes admission tickets to Greater and Lesser Shilin, and Ancient Stone Forest, a lunch, as well as tickets for return train and buses going to Shilin. Fees: 130 yuan. Two-day tour: The same itinerary for the first day. Stay in Shilin at night and there will be music and dance performance of the Yi people. The tour includes admission tickets to Dadianshui and Changhu (Long Lake), meals, accommodation, as well as tickets for return train and buses to every major scenic spots. Fees: 290 yuan. Tel: (871) 7711860, 7711665

From Shilin to Jiuxiang: Jiuxiang is famous for its karst mountain caves. Take a car to Yiliang first (5 yuan, 30 minutes). Then, take a mini-bus. (5 yuan, one hour). The road is quite undulating on the way. Admission to Jiuxiang: 50 yuan; cableway: 15 yuan. There are very few buses going from Jiuxiang to Kunming, one may need to hitch a ride. Time: about two hours.

To Yunnan Folk Culture Village, Xishan (West Hill): Bus No. 44 on Yongping Road outside the Kunming Railway Station. Admission to Folk Culture Village: 70 yuan. The best way to go to Xishan is to take the cableway built beside the Village. Taking about 10 minutes from the Railway Station, one can stay in the Songhuajiang Hostel located between Yongping Road and Chuncheng Road is very tidy and cheap, which is most suitable for DIY travellers. Single-bed room with bathing room: 80 yuan/ day.

(information by Mok Kwok Wah)



Tasting the Zhou's Shrimp Rolls in Southern Taiwan

Taiwan Taiwan snacks are famous all around the world, such as Daizai noodles, deep-fried oyster, and "Coffin Board" (a delicacy made of chicken's liver). Recently, the characteristic Zhou's Shrimp Rolls has also become very popular. Added with unique seasonings and cooked with secret in-house method, the rolls which are freshly deep-fried appear golden yellow, and taste sweet and juicy. The Zhou's Shrimp Rolls has a history of 50 years, but it has not been widely known since there is only one store in Kaohsiung, Tainan County. The second generation of the Zhou's family has though largely improved the environment and quality of the shop's service.

Add: Near Anping Ancient Castle, 408 Anping Road, Tainan County.

Price: NT\$40 (two shrimp rolls)

(photo & information by Chen Tianquan)

China's Ibis Population Increases

Environment According to recent statistics, the population of ibises, one of the most endangered bird species in the world, has increased to some 400 from only seven in the 1970s in China.

About 200 ibises have been artificially hatched and raised in captivity, and another 200 are living in the wild. After more than 20 years of research, the Shaanxi Ibis Protection and Observation Station has developed an effective method of rearing the rare species.

Ibises are distinguished by a red crest, grey plumage and hooked beak. Their origin has been traced back over 60 million years, with large flocks formerly existing in much of China, Japan and Germany. However, the species is now found only in China, mostly in mountainous areas in Shaanxi Province in the Mt. Qinling of Northwest China.

China Sets Rules to Protect Chinese White Dolphins

Environment China has been building an UN-backed zone to protect and showcase endangered Chinese white dolphins (*Sousa chinensis*) and preserve marine bio-diversity in offshore waters near Shantou City in Guangdong Province.

Sources from the Marine Affairs and Fishery Bureau of Nan'ao County, Guangdong, said the protection zone will be located between the sea waters of Dongshan Island of neighbouring Fujian Province and Nan'ao Island of Guangdong, where more than 1,300 kinds of marine life propagate because of subtropical climate and seawaters rich in nutritious substances swept in by inland rivers.

Chinese white dolphins, also known as Indo-Pacific hump-backed dolphins, are under top state protection in China as their population is estimated at between only several hundred and 1,000 and is gradually declining as fewer dolphins survive long enough to mate and reproduce.

The project, planned to be finished in four years, includes a range of activities such as educating local fishermen on protecting the living habitat of Chinese white dolphins and stepping up publicity to improve awareness among youngsters of protecting the endangered dolphin species.

Hengshan — Northern Sacred Mountain of China

Travel: The undulating ranges of Mt. Hengshan stretch 500 km from the northeast to southwest over northern parts of Shanxi and Hebei provinces. Since it connects with Mt. Taiheng in the east and overlooks the plateau areas of Youyan in the north, it forms a natural barrier for the two provinces. The ruins of the Great Wall within Hengshan, including the Wuningguan, Yanmenguan, Pingxingguan, Zixingguan and Daomaguan passes, plus some castles built during the Northern Song Dynasty (960—1127) indicate Hengshan's strategic geographical position for military purposes in Chinese history.

Listed in the top category of key state scenic attractions, Hengshan's main peak, Tianfeng Ridge, rises 2,017 metres above sea level. The steep northern slopes are clad in evergreen pines, while the southern slopes feature many Taoist temples. Among the 18 highlights are Xiankong (Hanging) Temple, Feishi Grotto, Huixian Hall and Jiutian Palace. Xiankong Temple built on the mountainside in the late Northern Wei Dynasty (386—534) is



26 metres above the valley bottom with its highest point 50 metres above the ground. Its ingenious architectural skill is breathtaking.

Transport: Fly to Taiyuan (Shanxi's capital city) or Datong. Go by bus to Hunyuan County, 300 km from Taiyuan and 65 km from Datong.

Dazu Grottoes: Reflecting Lives in Tang and Song Dynasties

Location: Located in Chongqing Municipal City covering the areas of the "five mountains"—Beishan, Baodingshan, Nanshan, Shiquanshan, and Shimenshan, the Dazu Grottoes boast about 50,000 Buddhist statues, and about 100,000 inscribed words. Among these, those statues and inscriptions on Baodingshan and Beishan are most famous. They are regarded as the representative of late grotto art in China.

Through abundant figurative images and written historical sources, the past artists had almost carved out all the contents of Buddhist sutras, which reflect the considerable development and change of religious belief in the folk during the Tang and Song dynasties (618—1279). There are lively description of the then living, such as "Muniu Daochang" (Cow's Farm) has revealed the unsophisticated life of the farming village and shepherd. Others also present the life of a woman getting married, pregnant, giving birth, and old. The detailed characteristic of Dazu Grottoes is rarely seen of its kind in China.

Transport: There are scheduled buses going to and from the bus terminus at the Chongqing Railway Station and Dazu County. The ride takes about two hours.

Admission: 50 yuan **Opening hours:** 08:00~17:00



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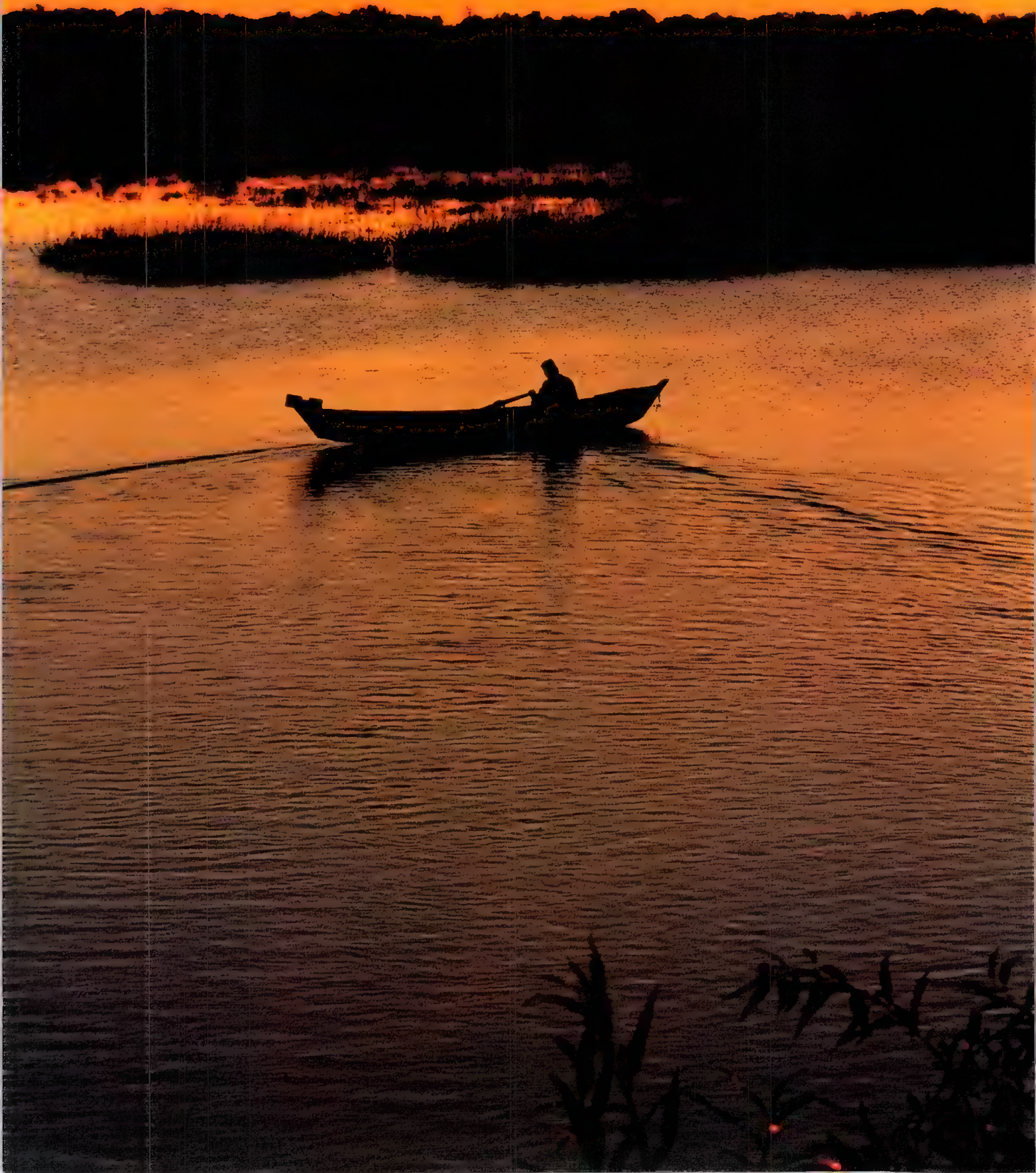
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AN ODYSSEY FROM NORTH TO EAST

Following the Heilongjiang

Photos by Huang Yanhong, Liu Xiangyang, Tao Jiaqiao, Du Dianwen & others. Article by Huang Yanhong

The Heilongjiang (Black Dragon River) is the third largest river in China. Its northern source is the Shilka River in Russia while its southern source is the Ergun River in Inner Mongolia. The middle part of the river serves as the border separating China and Russia. It joins the Wusuli River and then flows into Russia. Finally, it enters the Sea of Okhotsk via the Tatar Strait. The river stretches a total length of 4,370 km, 2,900 km of which passes through Heilongjiang Province.

Coincidentally, the two ends of the Heilongjiang within Chinese territory represent China's northernmost tip, at Mohe Township, and easternmost tip, at Wusu Town. I made the long journey along the river, shuttling between the two countries of China and Russia, visiting villages, towns and wetlands. All left an indelible impression.





The Heilongjiang is indeed a mighty river, full of sunshine and joy. However, it has also witnessed the vicissitudes of the area's history as well as the love-hate relationship between China and Russia.

My first stop was Mohe where I experienced the special thrill of standing at the northernmost place in the country. However, recalling how Mohe had suffered in the past cast a shadow: Japanese invasion and atrocities committed by the Czarist troops. When I left the ruins in Sunwu or stepped out the gate of the Aihui Museum, I felt deeply that only when a country becomes strong and powerful will it be free from bullying by others.

As soon as I arrived at Blagovescensk in Russia, I was overwhelmed by heart warming local hospitality. Beautiful Russian girls greeted us with charming smiles. By the time I left, I felt rejuvenated.

Tongjiang, home to the Hezhen, China's smallest ethnic minority, had always been an intriguing place to me. I was very interested in their lifestyle and the legends about the local chum salmon.

The Heilongjiang River winds onward and ends its journey in China at Fuyuan. Pollution of the river and the shrinking Sanjiang Wetlands were worrisome. After an excursion to Chabarovsk in Russia, I realized that a group of stylish old buildings makes a more powerful impact than posh-looking high-rises.

Mohe

— China's North Pole

Mohe has had the worst luck of all the county seats in China. A ruthless flood and terrible fire have devastated this town. Today a specially-built museum reminds the residents to never forget those lessons.



I arrived at Beiji (North Pole) Village in Mohe county, and found the Xinfangzhuang Hotel near the bus station.

● Water Shortage Subdues the Mighty River ●

Early next morning, I went to the big bend where the river makes a beautiful arc, marking the border at the northernmost end of the country. The locals call it "shuai wan zi".

It was very cold. A bank of fog lay across the water. The river at this point was not wide and the water seemed stagnant. But the river in front of me was quiet and slow, there was no power let alone waves.

Further downstream, I saw a few large tugboats moored languidly

by the riverside. When the day broke, a group of men showed up and began to unload logs from the boats. I was told the logs had been loaded on to the boats two months before. Due to a lack of water in the river the main channel was only 0.7 metres deep, one metre less than those boats required for navigation. So the logs were unable to be carried by water. People had waited for the water to rise. Now two months had passed and there was no sign of water levels rising. They had no alternative but to unload the logs and transport them overland.

● Charm at the Northern Tip of China ●

In the afternoon, I took a stroll in Beiji Village. It was so cold the



streets were rather deserted.

A group of tourists came into sight, all headed for the river. Beside it stands a huge rock carved with four characters "Shenzhou Beiji" (神州北極) indicating the "North Pole of China". It is a landmark sculpture. Anyone who comes to Mohe takes a photo of it as a memento. Beiji Village refers to Mohe Township, which has over 300 households. In the past, the residents lived in houses built entirely from wood in the Russian style. Moss and similar materials were used to fill the gaps between the logs. But now most people live in brick houses.

A grand event took place here on March 9, 1997. That was the day of the last total solar eclipse in the 20th century, which attracted tens of thousands of people. Luckily the eclipse and the Hale-Bopp Comet happened to appear on the same day, so it was a great occasion for astronomy enthusiasts. At the mention of that event, everyone here remembered it as though it occurred only the day before.

Normally there are not many tourists. After all it is a remote place and travelling there is exhausting. In high summer, the days are very long and it is still bright at 9 p.m. so the locals hold their unique "Summer Solstice Festival". During this festival, Mohe is in a great commotion. People gather in the square to sing and dance, passing the night as if it were broad daylight. What they long for most is to see the Northern Lights (aurora borealis). It is said the Northern Lights here have a strange spectrum of colours which is rarely seen.

In winter, Beiji Village is the coldest place in China. No wonder people call it the "Cold End". The temperature can fall as low as -52°C.

● Yanzhigou's History of Gold Mining ●

The bus from Beiji Village to the county seat of Mohe ran once a day, leaving at 6 a.m.

It pulled up at a place called the Yanzhigou (Rouge Gully) and waited there for a few minutes, hoping to pick up more passengers. The strange name was said to be given by Empress Dowager Cixi of the Qing Dynasty. I took this opportunity to get off and took a few pictures of the place.

Opening spread: In the lower reaches of the Heilongjiang River there are many branches and wetlands (by Tan Jingtao)

Previous spread: The Heilongjiang River Valley covered with snows (by Tan Jingtao)

1. Beijicun is the northernmost village of China (by Huang Yanhong)
2. The river flow is in too small amount, so the timbers have to be unloaded (by Huang Yanhong)
3. The rock carved with "Shenzhou Beiji" — the North Pole of China (by Huang Yanhong)

Writer Huang Yanhong's remarks

When I first came to Mohe, I was very surprised to find that the people here were so friendly and hospitable.

After a few days' stay, I found that the people here were very kind and helpful. They were very interested in my work and I was very interested in their life. I stayed in a small house in Mohe. The house was very simple but very comfortable. I was very happy to stay here.

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Mohe — China's North Pole



There was once a famous gold mine here. Mohe's modern history seemed to be all connected with digging for gold. Back in the first year of the reign of Qing Emperor Guangxu (1871 — 1908), two Russian hunters discovered by chance some glittering flecks of gold in a spring. This marked the beginning of the history of gold mining in the area. But the private mining soon came to the attention of the Russian government. It drove away those prospectors and turned the place into an official gold mine under the Russian government. In 1886, the Qing government sent an official named Li Jinyong, who had been threatened with dismissal, to work in Mohe as the supervisor of the Mohe Mining Bureau. According to historical records, Li was a clever man who successfully took over the gold mine. To scare away the Russians, Li resorted to the tactic known as "all's fair in war" from the classic entitled *The Art of War* by Sun Zi. The small number of the Qing troops stationed in the town sneaked out of town at night and re-entered it ostentatiously during the day. They did this for several days, trying to give the impression to the Russians that a large army was to be based there. To avoid trouble, the Russians ran away.

The gold mine was a fairly small-scale operation in the early days with 30 to 40 workers altogether. Mr. Li stamped "Mo Kuang" (Mohe Mine) on each gold ingot and detailed soldiers to escort them to the imperial court. Later on, Cixi bestowed the name Rouge Gully on the gold mine. Within a dozen years, there were a thousand miners. A century later, unexpectedly the place was still strewn with bright golden sand.

● County Seat with a Painful Past ●

Leaving Rouge Gully, I went to Xilin Town, the Mohe county seat. Buildings here were fairly new and streets neat. On a hill by the town stood a huge sculpture known as the Polaris, eye-catching and solemn.

The streets were very quiet now but people must remember many misfortunes that have befallen this town in the past. It was devastated several times by fire and flood. No one could forget those bitter experiences.

The county seat used to be at Beiji Village by the Heilongjiang River. In July 1958, a flood hit it and everything was inundated. The Russians promptly gave help and rescued many residents, moving them to higher ground. Though it happened 40 years ago, people still vividly remember that catastrophe.

In 1987 another calamity hit the place. A fire engulfed the whole county seat and only a stretch of old woods in the town survived. As a memorial to this misfortune, a museum was built to warn later generations to be on guard against fire. It is probably the only fire museum in China.

The museum displays many pictures of the fire engulfing the town: flames, ash, the injured, the corpses. Those pictures are painful for every viewer. There are also many objects exhibited that had been savaged by the fire: an almost totally melted pressure-cooker, a twisted bicycle, a deformed motorbike... All those exhibits seemed to be shouting that fire is ruthless.

On the night of May 6, 1987 the fire swept at a speed of over 100 km per hour across three forest administration bureau centres and nine forestry farms with a total area of 100,000 hectares, of which 70 percent was forest. Buildings covering 630,000 square metres were burnt to ashes. As a result, 50,000 people lost their homes, 211 died



and 266 were seriously injured. That fire raged for 28 days and wasn't extinguished until June 2.

Nearby the museum lies a park. It is in fact the pinewoods that miraculously survived the fire. This is the only park with primitive woods in China. Before the fire it was fairly large but today only six hectares remain.

I was told the fire had been caused by outsiders looking for gold. In those wooded areas, fire occurs more often than I had realized. During my trip, I heard fire alarm sirens many times and saw rising smoke darkening the whole sky. The forest bureau staff were extremely busy, primarily engaged in preventing or fighting fires mostly caused by the gold prospectors. I noticed the damaged riverbeds and woods. These prospectors acting in the interests of a few small groups,

have caused fires, destroyed vegetation and brought about serious social disturbance. I don't understand why such activities cannot be totally stopped. Is it because the lure of the shining gold is too strong?

Full of doubts, I left this troubled place.

1. Mohe is an ideal place to see the wonder of solar eclipse (by Liu Xiangyang)

2-4. The northernmost telephone booth, fishing boats and houses in China (by Huang Yanhong)

5. The Polaris Statue in the Mohe county seat (by Huang Yanhong)

6. An early morning view of the Heilongjiang River at the North Pole Village (by Huang Yanhong)

Mr. Hou the hotel owner

Mr. Hou is a hotel owner in Mohe. He has been in the hotel business for many years. He is a very experienced and successful businessman. He has a good reputation in the local community. He is a very kind and helpful person. He is a very successful businessman. He has a good reputation in the local community. He is a very kind and helpful person.

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Heihe—Witness to Sino-Russian History

As the largest frontier city in North China, Heihe seems to be a barometer of Sino-Russian relationships. Business between Chinese and Russians at the market on Great Heihe Island was brisk. The unhappy history of the Chinese people and the hostility between the two countries are all in the past. Today, people of both sides pray for peace.



There was no bus going direct to Heihe. The roads along the Heilongjiang River were not all that good. There were a few alternatives, but I had to make a big detour to get there. I had to give up my original plan to closely follow the Heilongjiang River. I chose the least economical but fastest route: take a train to Nenjiang and change to a long-distance bus bound for Heihe. If you look at the map, you'll see this route is twice as long as the crow flies.

What impressed me most in Heihe was the Heilongjiang Park on the banks of the river. It is a large, newly built park. Its green expanses dotted with various sculptures stretch for 3,000 metres with theme squares and beautiful gardens.

All kinds of activities were going on there from morning till evening. People gathered in the park to stroll, do ballroom dancing, practise martial arts. The most popular activity was *yangge* dancing (a popular rural folk dance in Shaanxi Province) which could be seen almost any time of day. *Yangge* has become very popular in recent years in North China. The participants are usually elderly men and women.

● Love and Hate Along the River ●

The rolling Heilongjiang bears silent witness to the relations between China and Russia. Since the mid-17th century, in particular, numerous events, happy and tragic, have occurred between the two countries. From the invasion of Czarist troops and annexation of a large area of China, to



1945 when the Red Army of the Soviet Union helped drive Japanese aggressors out of China, there were so many stirring stories.

As I walked along the river, I came across a monument commemorating the Red Army men who had laid down their lives in China in the war against Japan. It stood in a wood, the trees sighing as the autumn wind swept through. The early 1950s saw the best period between the two peoples. An elderly man told me the Russians had often helped us in those days. Everyone in Heihe felt grateful to and admiration for the people across the river. But relations grew tense in the 1960s and in 1969 Heihe was overshadowed by war.

The friendship between the two countries eventually recovered and by 1992 the market at Heihe was teeming with goods made in Russia. Life in Heihe is now peaceful and business brisk. Everywhere in the streets, you can see Russians with brown hair and pointed noses. A typical place for this was the Great Heihe Island.

This island is one kilometre from downtown Heihe City, and only 750 metres away from the other bank of the river. Located right in the middle of the main stream, the island is fairly large. In the days of hostilities, it was closed, sealed off by wire mesh fencing. Only a few bold peasants rowed dinghies to the eastern end of the island and opened up some plots to grow beans or watermelons.

Never ask a taxi driver to find a hotel for you

The taxi drivers at the Heihe Bus Terminal were all smiles when they saw passengers alighting from the bus. They offered to help with my luggage while filling me in on the local hotels. Grateful, I got in a taxi. The driver took me to the Jiangzhou Hotel by the Heilongjiang River. He followed me into the lobby.

"How much, please?" I asked.

"One hundred yuan per room."

"Make it a bit less, will you?" the driver bargained for me.

"Well, 80 then."

When I put down my luggage, the driver said his aunt was a hotel owner and would give me a big discount for the three-day excursion to Russia. So I followed him to another hotel. There I met his aunt and booked the excursion. Sure enough, it was dozens of yuan cheaper.

But when I saw my room at this hotel I felt taken in, as the bathroom was very dirty. Later on I learned that business at this hotel was rather poor and the price could be bargained down to 30 yuan per room. As for the trip to Russia, the hotel owner could make 30 yuan as kickback from my payment for the excursion. Only then I realised the whole story of the driver and his aunt was a trick.

1. Russian girls in flamboyant clothes (provided by the Heihe Tourism Bureau)
2. A memorial monument for the Red Army martyrs (by Huang Yanhong)
3. The Heihe Port was re-opened in 1987, which once again began the trade between China and Russia (by Huang Yanhong)
4. On a ship to Blagovescensk of Russia (by Huang Yanhong)
5. The Great Heihe Island and Blagovescensk of Russia face each other across the river (by Chan Yat Nin)



Heihe

Witness to Sino-Russian History



Heihe as a port has more than 100 years of history as a trade bridge between Russia and China. The port was reopened in 1987. Since then, Great Heihe Island has become a large border market, attracting crowds of people with either black or brown hair. A linguistic mixture of Russian and Chinese has become rather fashionable.

Today, a large international trade centre covering more than 30,000 square metres has been erected on the island, and it bustles with Russian and Chinese businessmen.

Locals prefer to call the island the "Shatoujiao of the North", after the market street of the same name separating Hong Kong and Shenzhen.



Downtown Heihe was rather deserted during the day, but began to warm up at dusk. Its main streets were all turned into a market. Those streets were lined with stalls selling various articles such as clothes, daily necessities, fruit, cooked food, etc. The busiest street was the one where Russian goods were sold. This 1,500-metre long street was piled with Russian goods ranging from army binoculars, heavy coats, military watches to woollen coats, sealskin hats and so on. This was the most attractive place to tourists. I saw a group of girls on a shopping spree here. When they left, they were all wearing elegant coats with fur collars, with splendid scarves draped over their arms, and they looked like dignified Russian ladies.

1. Russian merchants shopping in China (by Huang Yanhong)
2. The movie and TV base built on the Huolong Island at Wudao (by Chan Yat Nin)
3. Goods are being loaded and unloaded in International Trade Centre (by Huang Yanhong)
4. The river freezes in winter, and visitors have to ride the airship crossing the river (by Chen Haiwen)
5. The Great Heihe Island is a hot bordering trade spot in Heihe City (by Chan Yat Nin)

Tips for avoiding smoking

The most unbearable thing about travelling on a long-distance bus in a remote area is not the lurching of the bus or tiredness, but being forced to inhale the smoke of cheap cigarettes. The whole bus can be smoke-filled because of too many smokers which becomes unbearably suffocating.

When driven to the limit, I resorted to patient persuasion, sometimes followed by harder words. My advice is as follows:

- Find non-smokers to be your allies and remind them that the forced inhaling of smoke is hazardous to one's health and try to arouse their justified dissatisfaction.
- Choose to sit beside women passengers, since fewer women smoke.
- Try to find a seat in the back row, because I have noticed the smoke usually goes to the front in a closed bus.
- Frequently wave your hands to dispel smoke to make the smokers uneasy.
- Time your breathing. When a large cloud of smoke comes, hold your breath and inhale when the smoke has dispersed.
- Talk to the bus conductor and ask him or her to stop smoking in the bus.
- Offer some melon seeds to the smokers and ask them not to smoke in return.

Once I successfully persuaded an elderly woman not to smoke in a bus. She bore it for two hours and looked rather miserable. Her fellow traveller said to her: "Forget it. Just go ahead and smoke!"

Courteously she patted me on the shoulder and said: "Big brother, may I smoke?" I could only nod my assent. This little event left an indelible impression.

Aihui—War-Scarred Ancient Town

Among all scenic spots in Heilongjiang, Aihui suffered the most in the past, and has endured the vicissitudes of the history between China and Russia. The signing of the unfair Aihui Treaty also aroused great anger among the Chinese.



This ancient town was first built in the Yongle reign (1403 — 1423) of Ming Emperor Chengzu. It was intended to hold off remnants of the Yuan Dynasty. Emperor Chengzu built the town at a place called Weixiaoleyi Village, now in Russian territory, on the left bank of the Heilongjiang River.

In 1685, Aihui was moved to its present location. A Russian named Mark wrote vividly in his *Travels in Heilongjiang*: "Once out of the fortress, I came across a long and wide street.... Almost all houses had shops facing the border. Each shop had a signboard with colourfully written characters in both Han and Mongolian languages. Dangling on the wooden poles were paper-cuts with various patterns, pennants and paper dragons. All these made the street look rather strange and unique."

On August 3, 1900, Czarist troops attacked Aihui from three sides. Both soldiers and civilians put up a fierce fight to resist the aggression but were unfortunately overpowered. The aggressors set fire to this 200-year-old town and only the Kuixing Tower survived.

● Dark Days Recorded at Aihui Museum ●

A historical museum was built in Aihui to record the dark days that all Chinese should remember.

In the museum compound stands the Kuixing Tower and a large

pine tree, both witnesses to the history of the town. By the main building, part of a garden is divided into two by a large triangle, indicating some 600,000 sq km of Aihui territory annexed to Russia under the Sino-Russian "Treaty of Aihui" (or Treaty of Aigun).

Some 1,858 wind chimes hang on a section of the town wall exhibited in the museum's main hall, indicating the year the Treaty of Aihui was signed.

Two groups of sculptures in one exhibition hall were vivid and lifelike.

The first referred to the "Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk", depicting a group of Qing government officials arguing with Czarist Russian officials. At that time in the 1640s, China was still quite powerful but the Russians had often seriously harassed ethnic groups living along the Heilongjiang River. In 1655, Russian troops attacked Yakesa Town and occupied a large area of the Hulun Buir Grassland. They rebuilt Yakesa Town as a base for further invasions of China. The Qing government strengthened its presence in this area and negotiated the Sino-Russian Treaty of Nerchinsk with the Russians. During the half century after the treaty, the Qing government took various measures to reinforce administration of a large area on the northern bank of the Heilongjiang River, and Aihui grew into an important city on the upper reaches.

"The Treaty of Aihui" was an unequal treaty that aroused the indignation of all Chinese. The sculptures depicting this event stand in the centre of the hall. The Qing officials looked so weak and helpless. This all happened in the latter half of the 19th century. By then the Qing Dynasty was already in decline, and powerless in the face of Czarist Russian aggression. In 1858, it was forced to sign this notorious treaty under military pressure from Czarist Russia.

After the Treaty of Aihui went into effect, the Liushisitun in Jiangdong on the other side of the Heilongjiang River was still under

Sunwu — Witness to Japanese Aggression

I took a train from Heihe to Sunwu.

Sunwu County was laid waste by the Japanese who committed terrible atrocities there. Numerous traces of their crimes are still visible all over the county.

Two days before my arrival, a large-scale clean up had just been completed. A team of more than 30 Japanese army men and specialists had tackled 513 gas bombs buried there during the Japanese invasion. Under relevant agreements, the Japanese government has to deal with such problems left over by the war.

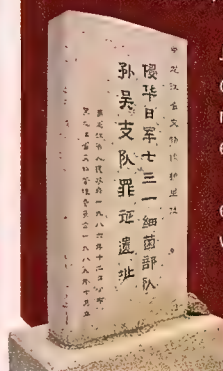
But those gas bombs are not all. There are a great number of military works, evidence of the Japanese aggression in China. When ruled by the Japanese and its puppet regime, Sunwu served as one of the major military bases for Japanese troops stationed in northeast China. As an indication of the importance of Sunwu, the Chinese commander stationed there was a lieutenant general, whereas the commander based in Harbin was only a major general.

Also exhibited in a museum at Sunwu was a collection of pictures and relics. The Japanese team members who handled the gas bombs as well as some Japanese youngsters visited the museum. They were rather nonchalant at first. But the more they saw of those pictures and exhibits, the heavier their hearts grew.

When they left, they wrote such comments as shocking and heart-rending.

Museum director Wu showed me a few military works left by the Japanese. The most difficult to approach were strategically hidden in the folds of Mt Shenshan by the Heilongjiang River. They went deep underground with many tunnels stretching in all directions. The battery platforms could be extended and withdrawn, all pointed towards Heilongjiang Province.

In the county seat of Sunwu, many traces of the Japanese invasion still exist: a power plant, the club for generals and colonels, branch 673 of germ warfare unit 731... As time passes and due to human destruction, many of those traces have disappeared. This concerns the museum management which hopes to get support from the public to preserve the evidence of aggression that many Japanese still refuse to admit.



Chinese control. In 1900, the Boxer Movement took place in China. Seizing this opportunity, Czarist Russia sent troops to the Northeast of China and committed massacres at Hailanpao and Liushisitun, which shook the whole world. Both Heihe and Aihui were reduced to ashes. Based on this historical event, a huge panoramic painting entitled *Hailanpao Massacre* is displayed — 76 metres long and 19 metres wide. Good acoustics, resonant voices, effective lighting and slides depict scenes of the atrocities committed by the Russian aggressors who savaged Hailanpao by burning, killing and looting, and driving residents into the Heilongjiang River.

These tragic events happened in Czarist times. Later, China and the Soviet Union became friendly neighbours. And after a hiatus in the 1960s, China and Russia resumed their amicable relations.

Sunwu came to the village to be "re-educated". In those days, the village was surrounded by wasteland. So those teenagers were asked to reclaim the land, grow crops, collect manure, cut down straw and hunt in the mountains. Life was naturally very hard and the prime years of their lives were wasted.

In 1999, a group of them returned to the village, some even bringing their children with them, to see the place where they had once lived and worked. When they returned to Shanghai, they began collecting donations. Finally, they accumulated 120,000 yuan with which they built a new building of 350 square metres for the village primary school.

Translated by Wang Mingjie

● Moving Museum to Re-educated Youth ●

The Museum to Re-educated Youth was a heart-breaking place. It is located in a small room at a primary school in Henan Village, dozens of kilometres away from the Sunwu county seat. On show were scores of black and white photos taken by a Mr Yang, a specialist in local history. In 1969, 28 so-called educated youths from Shanghai and



1. The Kuixingge Tower in Aihui (by Chen Haiwen)
2. The newly built Aihui History Exhibition Hall (by Huang Yanhong)
3. The historical event reappear in the exhibition hall (by Huang Yanhong)
4. The site of biological warfare unit 731 of the Japanese troop in Sunwu (by Huang Yanhong)
5. Lovely pupils at the Henan Village Primary School (by Huang Yanhong)

Blagovescensk (Hailanpao.)

— Youthful Students City

Following Russian business people of various shapes and Chinese tourists in their

trim corporate suits, I arrived in Russia. I was immediately inspired by its exoticness: the autumn sights, fallen leaves that are never swept up, old buildings, old lifts, old streets, but youthful faces everywhere. This place is a famous university town, also the third biggest city in the Far East of Russia.



I joined a three-day tour to Blagovescensk in Russia. At 7 in the morning, I arrived at the Zhongzhi Building on time. People who sign up here early in the morning can be organised into a group and go abroad the same day. That's highly efficient.

● Hoping Pedlars Pass Through Customs ●

The ship left at 11:30. The destination was only across the river, so

it took just over 10 minutes to reach the opposite bank. In the passengers' hall of the Russian customs, it was very busy. Crowds of Russian business people were donning more and more clothes like people possessed. A slim girl put on one pair of trousers after another, nine of them in total, with trademark tags all flying around her waist. A rotund auntie had her own marvellous trick: she hung three to five pairs of trousers on each of her legs, lacing them on with adhesive

tape. This method was by no means inferior to the girl's. Apparently Russian customs rule that the goods carried on passengers themselves are exempt from taxation. These pedlars elbowed their way through the Chinese tourist bystanders, staggering under the weight of too many clothes, just to make a living. I felt somewhat sorry for them and fervently hoped they would pass the customs inspection.

Blagovescensk City is in sight of Heihe City across the river. It is the third largest city in the Far East, and one of the earliest cities in the Far East too. It has a population of 250,000, of whom college students of various types account for over 50,000. More than 20 special colleges or institutions above the level of technical secondary schools are located here. There are also many schools for ordinary education. So Blagovescensk is known as "Students City".

On a map published in China, Blagovescensk is shown as Hailanpao, one place among an area of more than 600,000-sq-km annexed by Russia in 1858. In the same year, Czar Alexander II signed a decree to set up the municipality of Blagovescensk, initiating the establishment of this city.

Nowadays, Hailanpao is the capital of Russia's Amur State.

We stayed in the Friendship Hotel where most Chinese visitors lodge. This hotel has a rather long history. Its lift was made in the 1950s, and holds just five people, swinging and moving slowly; the keys to the rooms are tied to pieces of wood like common seals, making pockets bulge awkwardly; the furniture in the rooms is also as old as granny, but most rooms are clean and tidy, just like the old houses in the street that have kept their original structures where possible and a sense of history.

Gambling is legal in the district, and casinos are available in all larger hotels. From early morning to late at the night, the casino at the Friendship Hotel is always crowded with Chinese tourists. They enter cheerfully, and come out with set expressions.

Outside the Friendship Hotel, I strolled along Lenin Street. It took more than 10 minutes to walk to Lenin Square, the centre of the city. This large square was built in 1967, the 50th anniversary of the Soviet Revolution. It is 8.4 hectares in area, and on all the significant festivals



1. The Heilongjiang riverside in dusk (by Huang Yanhong)
2. Beautiful Russian girls (by Huang Yanhong)
3. Old style buildings available everywhere in the streets (Liu Xiangyang)
4. The introduction about Lenin in the Museum (by Huang Yanhong)
5. Riding through a cross-river bridge in Blagovescensk (by Huang Yanhong)



The first battleship dispatched by the Soviet in 1945 (by Huang Yanhong)



The trolley in Blagovest (by Huang Yanhong)



A newly built Orthodox Eastern church (by Huang Yanhong)





Lively-decoration in the streets of Blagovescensk
(by Huang Yanhong)



Wooden house in Blagovescensk (by Huang Yanhong)



The statue of Lenin in the Lenin Square (by Huang Yanhong)

Blagovescensk — Youthful Students City

every year such as October Revolution Day or May Day, grand gatherings and processions are held there.

Here I took pictures without any scruple, mostly of Russian girls, pretty, decent and vigorous, never showing any dislike when they faced my camera; while getting shots of boys, however, one might stir up some troubles. Two boys volunteered to make faces before my camera, but after the sound of a click, they immediately asked me for some money.

● Splendid Golden Leaves in Late Autumn ●

It was late autumn, and yellow leaves blown off the trees by the wind thickly covered the ground. No one swept the ground, leaving a soft carpet of leaves underfoot. Such beautiful sights can be seen everywhere in Blagovescensk.

Further on, I arrived at Victory Square. On the bank of the Heilongjiang River (the local Russians called it the Amur River) not far away, there seemed to be a huge sculpture of a ship. From closer inspection, I found it was an old warship, long retired. The Soviet Red Army entered China to fight against Japanese troops in 1945, and this gunboat was the first to cross the river.

There is an excellent museum in Blagovescensk, well worth a visit. Built in 1891, it preserves more than 4,000 objects, deserving its reputation as an encyclopedia on Blagovescensk. The exhibits include teeth and limb bones of huge mammoths; primitive tools and decorative articles such as shell rings once worn by ancient peoples; specimens of animals and birds living in this part of the world; the history of the Czarist period, and a presentation on the industries, agriculture and people's daily lives during the Soviet period. There are also costumes, ornaments and lifestyle articles, plus a special kind of house of the Ewenki people. I noticed the museum lacked a display on World War Two and wondered why.

A visit to farmhouses was one of the tourist programs. We

followed our guide to a farmhouse, and the warmhearted host came out to meet us. Vasili aged 59 used to be a driver at a factory before he retired; now he lived in the suburbs and managed more than 50 hectares of land. He had a vegetable plot near his house where potatoes and radishes were planted. All his children were married and lived elsewhere though they came home to help their father in busy seasons.

We felt quite at ease when we visited his house. He was not rich, but the household was neatly arranged. We had a look at every corner in the rooms. We went down to the cellar in turn, noticing potatoes, and the liquor so essential for Russian people.

1. Lovely Russian girls never reject camera lens (by Zou Zhiqiang)
2. The detailed Russian history could be seen in the city museum (by Huang Yanhong)
3. Late autumn street view (by Huang Yanhong)
4. In a Russian family (by Huang Yanhong)
5. At the corner of a Russian bar (by Huang Yanhong)

Image of Chinese tourists needs improving

On the way, the guide explained some local customs to me. For example, not shaking hands over a threshold, not speaking loudly on the street, not grabbing a distant seat in a bus, not forking pieces of bread, not smoking in public places, not walking with two hands crossed behind your back because only people seized by the police walk that way. But unfortunately, some Chinese sightseers or business people in Blagovescensk do not behave themselves very well. Among the Chinese tourists strolling about in the streets, there's no lack of those in business suits and leather shoes who swagger, make a racket, spit on the ground, and behave rudely to others. This behaviour has encouraged a stereotype of ill-mannered Chinese visitors.

When visiting the Blagovescensk Museum, such people talk loudly, touch the exhibits if they want to, constantly interrupt explanations, and so on... Their behaviour not only annoys museum staff but also embarrasses other Chinese people.





Tongjiang

— Home to the Hezhen People

It must be cool to wear fish-skin costumes — clothing made from fish skins, of course — like the Hezhen people who live in Tongjiang. This

ancient ethnic group with the smallest population of any in China is closely related to the Nüzhen people of history. Not until the Qing Dynasty did the indigenous people living here begin to be called Hezhen. They are also a minority across the border. In Russian territory, they are known as Nanai.

Tongjiang is found at the northern end of the Sanjiang (literally “three rivers”: the Heilongjiang, Wusulijiang and Songhuajiang rivers) Plain. Here the Heilongjiang and Songhuajiang rivers converge and then flow east in the shape of a broad fork known as Sanjiangkou (Three-River Estuary) among the locals. It is four kilometres away from the county seat, now one of the major local scenic sites.

Tongjiang used to be called Halasusu in the past, and the Hezhen people have lived here since ancient times. The Hezhen are China’s smallest ethnic group with a population only amounting to several thousand. The Hezhen people in Tongjiang mainly inhabit Jiejinkou Township.

● From Heroic Hunters to Expert Fishermen ●

The Hezhen people lived by fishing and hunting generation after generation. But due to shrinking forestry resources and government regulations for the protection of wild animals, the Hezhen gave up their hunting activities and focused on fishing. Unfortunately, however, due to excessive fishing, especially the significant loss of fry, the variety and amount of fish has severely decreased, and living standards among the fishing communities have begun to decline. Now some initiatives are underway to try to introduce new industries.

Among the many fish in this region, salmon are unique. They





water, and launch an attack with split second timing. Almost every throw hits the target.

● Precious Fish-skin Costumes ●

The fish they catch are their staple food as well as for sale. Their methods for cooking fish vary, the most common are braising, boiling and frying. Fried fish flosses are unique. First, boned fish are put into a pan and fried until they become dried flosses, which are then packed into a basket made of birch bark or a pot, sealed and buried underground. When there is an occasion to serve them, they are taken out, and the taste is quite delicious. They are one of the favourite dishes on festival days or to welcome honoured guests.

The Hezhen people not only catch and eat fish, but also make clothes from fish skins. Usually they dry the skins from big fish in the sun, and then repeatedly beat them with wooden sticks until they become soft. After that, dyestuffs distilled from wild flowers might be used to dye the skins various colours, and finally they are sewn together. Such costumes are fine, warm, waterproof and tough. But unfortunately the resources are too limited and all the products are hand made, so it is difficult to get them to the outside world. Nowadays the fish-skin costumes have become a kind of artwork in galleries.

1. The Hezhen people catching fish at the estuary of Bachaxia River (by Du Dianwen)
2. Tongjiang is rich in fishes (by Liu Xiangyang)
3. A Hezhen woman drying fish slices in the sunlight (by Du Dianwen)
4. The Hezhen people still sew fish-skin clothes (by Du Dianwen)
5. The Hezhen people like to eat roast fish (by Du Dianwen)
6. The Great Imperial Fish got their name because they were offered to the emperors as a tribute in ancient times, which are well-known for their rare spawns (by Yuan Zhizhu)

migrate to spawn, breeding only once in their lives. They spawn after they swim back to the Heilongjiang and Wusulijiang Rivers. Every spring, the eggs hatch and the fry swarm downstream to the sea. When they return, the salmon are preyed upon.

It is amazing to see how the Hezhen people catch fish in winter. First they have to cut a hole in the ice of the river, and then put a line with a false fish as bait into the water, agitating it constantly. Big fish often take the bait. Some other people use spears. They observe the ripples in the



Fuyuan — Eastern End of China

The wetlands in Sanjiang are the most important resource of Fuyuan, and a quick glance at their wonders is enough to amaze most people. Sadly, however, over many decades, numerous volunteers for border development have drained the wetlands for farmlands, and the sweat of generations has created ecological degradation.



the Russian territory across the river. It is an important migration route and habitat for the birds of Northeastern Asia. Unfortunately, all too often the natural environment there suffers damage.

Vast areas of wetlands stretch along the Wusuliang River from Wusu Town to Zhuaji Town. Nearby, clumps of bushes flourish in the swamps and in the distance are wild woods and other water plants. Just as we were exclaiming at their vitality, we suddenly saw a piece of newly reclaimed farmland. The

It took a whole day to travel from Jiamusi to Fuyuan. It was the very harvest season. All the way the horizon was extremely broad, and combined croppers sparsely scattered on the fields. That was a place making people cheerful.

● Worrying Sanjiang Wetlands ●

This place used to be well-known as Beidahuang (the Great Northern Wilderness). But extensive land reclamation has turned former wetlands into farmland, a Great Northern Granary. Because of the blind development of farmland, the Sanjiang Plain has dwindled at an alarming rate, and the area of the wetlands shrunk from 4.43 million hectares in the 1950s to 1.90 million hectares in the 1990s. So in 1994, the Sanjiang Wetland Protection Area was set up to begin an emergency rescue mission.

Enjoying a unique geological locality, the Sanjiang Wetlands form part of an intact ecological system together with the broad wetlands in

ploughed areas looked like several shaved spots on a head full of beautiful hair, thoroughly disgusting. My local friends were also

Wear dark clothes when travelling

The first day of our trip to Fuyuan, I had seen a lot of mosquitoes when we were in the city. I had heard that the mosquitoes in Fuyuan were very big and that they would bite people. I had heard that the mosquitoes in Fuyuan were very big and that they would bite people. I had heard that the mosquitoes in Fuyuan were very big and that they would bite people.

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irritated at the sight of it. According to them, only one forestry station existed in Fuyuan in the 1970s, with a single worker nicknamed "Blind Lian" manning it, yet the woods throughout the whole county were all well looked after. But now there are more and more law breakers, and the forestry bureau staffed with 100 people fails to prevent wetland destruction.

● First Place to See Sunrise in China ●

Rich in fish, Fuyuan is the only place in China yielding sturgeon and salmon so is known as a "fish capital". Soon after dawn every day the riverbanks begin to be busy; small boats return one by one, and fish pedlars hurry there at the news. They bargain with the fishermen in front of a large pile of live fish.

There is a wealth of attractive tourism resources in and around the county seat of Fuyuan. Visitors can travel to Chabarovsk in Russia, or tour the famous Sanjiang Wetlands. They can climb the high mountain west of Fuyuan to see the sun slowly rising over the river, and overlook the dense housing in the county seat, or pay their respects at the monument to Soviet naval martyrs in the Western Mount Park. Outside the county seat worthwhile sights include the Mangjita town relics from the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty, and the

temple below Mt. Chengzi for the fourth master of the time-honoured Bai family.

Wusu Town has the most visitors, and is a must-see attraction for all tourists coming to Fuyuan.

Located at the very easternmost end of China, Wusu Town is the place where people see the earliest sunrise in the country. At 2:15 a.m. every Summer Solstice when most of China is still sound asleep, dawn has already stealthily begun here. A frontier watchtower called "China's Easternmost Sentry Post" is stationed in the town, and is a symbol for the area. The clear Wusulijiang River flows in front of the watchtower, and not far ahead the Heilongjiang River is waiting to join it. Small fishing boats draw in nets; occasionally Russian frontier patrol craft arrive to chase off some Chinese fishermen who might have crossed the boundary illegally to fish. A riverside weather station must also be the easternmost one in China.

1. A bird's eye view of the Fuyuan county seat (by Huang Yanhong)
2. A glance at the Sanjiang Wetlands (by Huang Yanhong)
3. The easternmost sentry post of China in Fuyuan (by Huang Yanhong)
4. Fuyuan, the easternmost point, is a place to see the earliest sunlight in China (by Huang Yanhong)

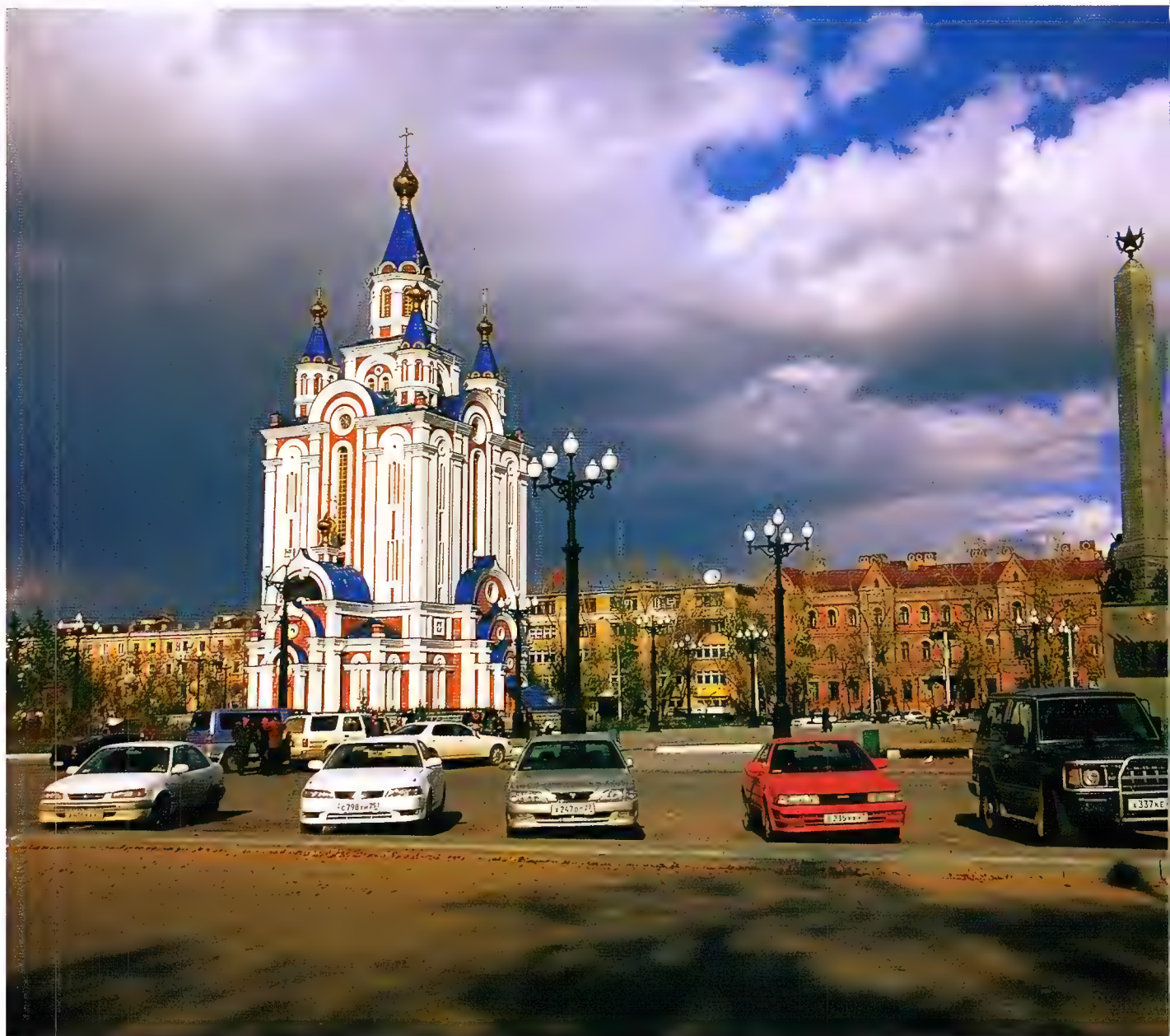


Chabarovsk (Boli)

— Largest City in the Far East of Russia

The square named after Lenin is still there, and so is his statue. Comrade Lenin is still in high spirits today. Citizens still offer him flowers to show their respect. That is a little epilogue to an important historical era. In Glorious Square over 40,000 Chabarovsk Red Army soldiers are immortalised.

I ambled around some major streets, blaming myself for not speaking Russian. Several days passed quickly, and what impressed me most were the building complexes, tidy, old, and full of a sense of history.





I joined the three-day tour of Chabarovsk organised by the Fuyuan International Travel Agency.

This journey was 65 km, and we travelled by hydrofoil. Business people both from China and Russia rely on water transport to maintain their trade, but in winter the customs closes and trade is cut off for more than four months of the year. The locals are trying to open a second route from Wusu Town, whereby vehicles can drive across the ice on the river in winter to Chabarovsk on the opposite side.

Chabarovsk is the largest city in the Far East of Russia. Built along the river, it extends for 42 km from north to south, and is 27 km wide from west to east.

Chabarovsk used to be Chinese territory, known as Boli. Czarist Russia annexed it through the Beijing Treaty signed with the Qing Dynasty government. In the old city area three major roads stretch in an west-east direction, Lenin Street, Marx Street and Selishcheve Street. A wharf stands on the riverbank, at the end of the confluence of the Heilongjiang and the Wusulijiang rivers.

● War Machines in the Streets ●

Chabarovsk is also an important Russian military base, the headquarters for the Far East Army when the former Soviet Union attacked the Japanese army in Northeast China in 1945. At the end of the war, 550,000 Japanese captives were sent across the border, dispatched from this place to every corner of Russia to work as coolies for the country's postwar recovery. Many two-storey, green, woodcarved houses along the streets were made by them.

In the southern suburbs of Chabarovsk is an area of beautiful woods where important war criminals from the Japanese troops in Northeast China were held; among them was also Puyi, the last Chinese emperor.

Standing on a high spot in the riverside park, one can see the confluence of the Heilongjiang and Wusulijiang Rivers. The Wusuli flowing from the south and the Heilongjiang from the west are coloured white and black respectively. Even five kilometres past their junction, the separate river streams are still distinctly black and white. The Heilongjiang River is severely polluted but the water of the Wusulijiang River is clean, so the locals both swim in and drink the water of the Wusulijiang.

I saw old tanks now and then in the streets, as well as retired MIG fighters and river patrol gunboats. The previous Soviet regime had the habit of mounting military hardware in the streets as symbols, both to create a display and encourage the locals. All tourists like to take pictures in front of the Soviet era war machines.

1. Chabarovsk is the biggest city in the Far East of Russia (by Huang Yanhong)
2. A great hall built in 1960s (by Huang Yanhong)
3. A girl rides a horse in crossing the street (by Huang Yanhong)
4. A kid playing with pigeons in a square (by Huang Yanhong)

Chabarovsk — Largest City in the Far East of Russia

● Returning Twice to Answer Nature's Call ●

Along Central Street from the Communist Youth Square lies Lenin Square, the centre of the city. The Lenin Statue in the square was the first in the whole Soviet Union and has stood there since 1922 and never been damaged. Over the years, Lenin Squares were established in all Soviet cities. After the Soviet Union disintegrated, some cities renamed their Lenin Squares. Chabarovsk is remote, however, so its Lenin Square still retains its name. Actually, it's often wise to preserve existing settings and their names so history is not forgotten. As time passes, both become more and more valuable.

There is also a large market in Weibolasike Street in the suburbs, where most vendors were Chinese dealers retailing and wholesaling goods from China. Some Russians dealt in Italian furs in that bazaar, too. Chinese people are smart at business, and this is the consensus among the locals. As early as the mid-19th century, Chinese people were known for their business acumen. At that time, the local people all thought Chinese goods were cheap and reliable. Many Chinese craftsmen even went to Russia for seasonal work, spending summers there and returning to China in winter. A worker could earn more than 20 golden rubles.

Around Glorious Square are still preserved the national emblems of the previous Soviet Union's 15 republics, in memory of over 42,000 Red Army soldiers from Chabarovsk who died in World War II. Their names are engraved on black marble.

I particularly enjoyed strolling about here, but the most annoying thing was not finding any public toilets anywhere on the streets when I urgently needed one. In a single day I took a taxi twice to return to the hotel just for urgent calls of nature. (Here any private car can be hailed as a taxi if the driver is willing. The charges are the same, priced at 50 rubles). Later I asked my guide to write down the word for toilet in Russian in case I needed it urgently. However I had no chance to use it in the end.



Translated by Huang Deyuan

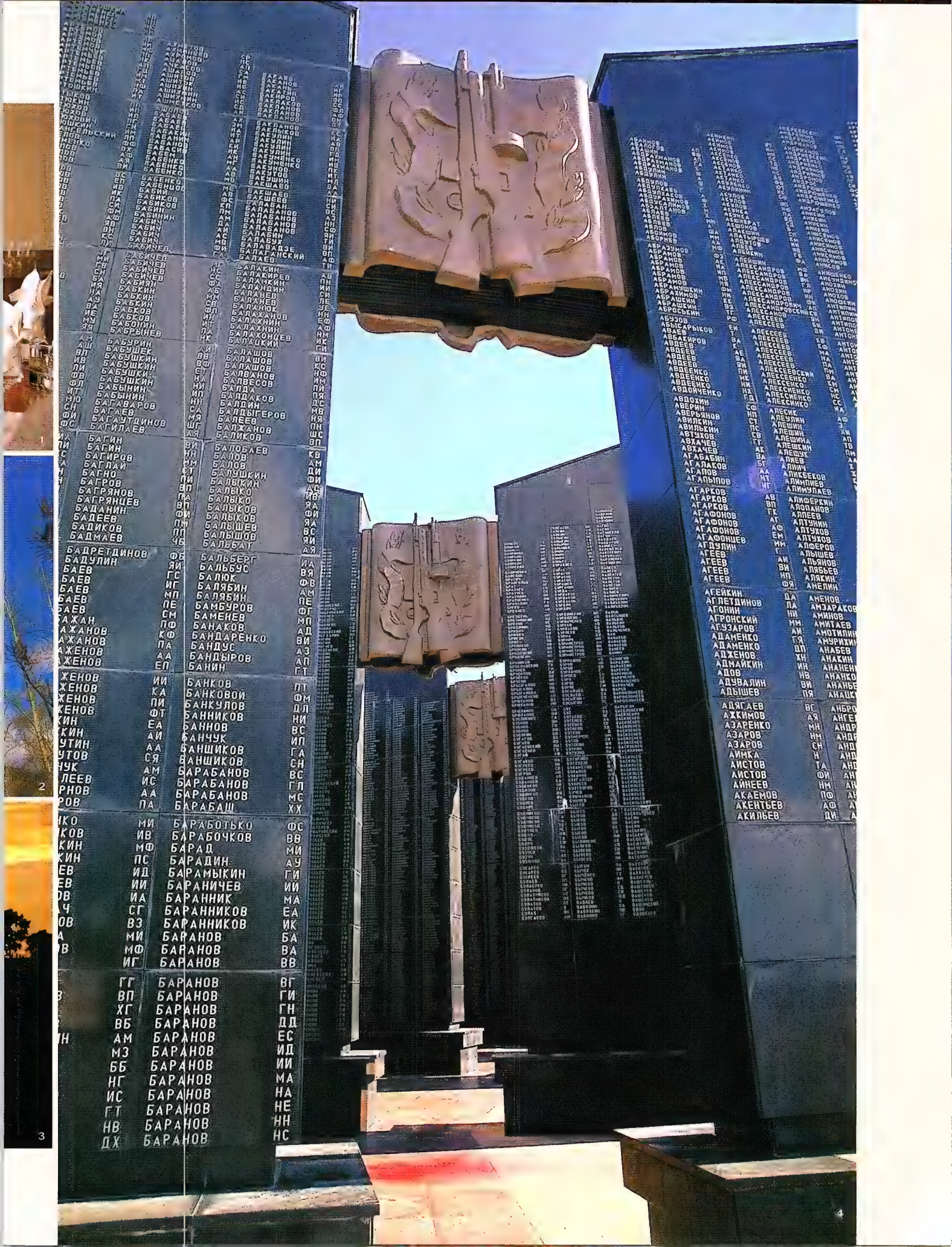
1. A charmingly smiling girl in a restaurant (by Huang Yanhong)
2. Tanks have also become street statues (by Huang Yanhong)
3. The dusk of Chabarovsk (by Liu Xiangyang)
4. The Red Army soldiers coming from Chabarovsk who died in the World War II were listed in Glorious Square (by Huang Yanhong)



Tour guide's warning : Don't go outside alone in the evening

Beautiful street lamps come on in the early evening, and it is the best time to photograph cities. As usual I was going to go out by myself, but was stopped by my guide, who earnestly persuaded me to stay at the hotel. The most important reason was lack of security.

The guide said in recent years robberies targeting Chinese had occurred frequently. Chinese people upset the locals on three counts. One was that a few Chinese traders were too cunning. They sold false goods, even filling so-called down jackets with black cotton. Secondly some Chinese tourists were too ill-mannered and annoyed other people. Thirdly when they saw the name of Bali on a map of China, they would declare that China still intended to take back the territory. So when local young people who loved to drink in the evenings formed gangs after excessive drinking, the Chinese tourists naturally became targets on which to vent their annoyance.



Travel Tips

Transport

Beijing — Hailar	(Flight / once a day / 990 yuan)
Hailar — Mangui	(Train / once a day)
Hailar — Labudalin — Enhe	(Morning bus / 25 +16 yuan)
Enhe — Jilalin	(Bus / pass at noon / 20 yuan)
Jilalin — Mordaoge	(Morning bus / 20 yuan)
Mordaga — Mangui	(Train / noon depart / 18 yuan)
Mangui — Mohe	(Morning bus / 25 yuan)
Mohe — North Pole Village	(Morning bus / 25 yuan)
North Pole Village — Mohe	(Morning bus / 25 yuan)
Mohe — Nenjiang	(Hard sleeper train / depart at 19:00 / 98 yuan)
Nenjiang — Heihe	(Many buses a day / 46 yuan)
Heihe — Aihui	(Bus departs at 06:00 and 11:00. Return by taking taxi in the afternoon. About 8 yuan / person)
Heihe — Sunwu	(Hard sleeper train / depart at 07:30 / 12 yuan)
Sunwu — Xunke	(Noon bus / 14 yuan)
Suanke — Jiayin	(Morning bus / 33 yuan)
Jiayin — Kegang	(Morning bus / 43 yuan)
Kegang — Jiamusi	(Many buses a day / 10 yuan)
Jiamusi — Fuyuan	(Many buses a day / 76 yuan)
Fuyuan — Jiamusi	(Many buses a day / 76 yuan)
Jiamusi — Harbin	(Many buses a day / 60 yuan)
Harbin — Beijing	(Hard sleeper train / afternoon depart / 270 yuan)

Sight-seeing

Recommended routes: From Beijing to Harbin by train, then a transfer to Mohe (starting from Harbin at six in the afternoon). Forward from Mohe to the North Pole Village (the Mohe Township) by an early morning regular bus. After a visit to the North Pole Village, return to Mohe county seat. The afterward routes are as the following: Nenjiang (Wudalianchi Scenic Areas is nearby) — Heihe (Visit Aihui Museum and join the two-day or three-day journey to Blagovescensk in Russia) — Sunwu (The relics of Japanese aggressor troops, an exhibiting Hall with the evidence of Japanese aggression against China, etc) — Xunke (the small trains among forests and the drifting on the Sun River) — Jiayin (the dinosaur excavation spots) — Yichun (The Xiao Hinggan Ling Mountains) — Tongjiang (the Hezhe nationality, the ethnic group of the smallest population in China) — Fuyuan (visiting the Sanjiang Wetlands, the First Sentry Post of East China in Wusu Town, a three-day tour to Chabarovsk) — Harbin — Beijing

During the course, the routes could be changed according to your time. For an example, You can leave the Mohe county seat for Tahe, then for Huma and Heihe. On the way you can visit villages of the Oroqen nationality. You also can travel from Jiayin to Jiamusi, and then directly to Fuyuan, which can save some times.

- **Admission for Aihui Museum:** 25 yuan
- **Three-day tour to Blagovescensk (start from Heihe):** About 1,500 yuan; go through formalities in Zhongzhi Dasha Building. For more information, please contact (www.longtour.net) or (Tel: 456-8259117)
- **Three-day tour to Chabarovsk (start from Fuyuan):** About 1,900 yuan; For more information, please contact Fuyuan International Travel Service (Tel.: 454-2133424; 13903643899).

Accommodation

Beijicun Xinfangzhuang Hostel: 15 yuan/ bed	Mohe Hotel (Zhonghua Rd): 200 yuan/ rm
Sunwu Government Reception Centre: 80 yuan/ rm	Jiayin County Government Hostel: 100 yuan/ rm
Zuibeizijia Hostel: 20 yuan/ bed	Heihe Sanjiang Hostel: 15 yuan/ bed
Xunke Jiangdu Hotel: 120 yuan/ rm	Fuyuan Wuzhuangbu Hostel: 15 yuan/ bed



Beyond the YANMENGUAN PASS

Photos & article by Ren Shuyin



From the map of Shanxi Province, you can see that Daixian County lies in the northern part where the Hengshan and Yunzhongshan mountains meet. As a buffer against invasion from the north, this county has been an important military outpost since the Warring States Period (475–221 B.C.). The Yanmenguan Pass in the town of Daixian was even regarded as one of the "Nine Passes Under Heaven".

But the cruel passage of time has left the Yanmenguan Pass of today much the worse for wear, having long lost its former glory.

The condition of Yanmenguan Pass was worse than we imagined. The only sites worth a look were three gates and remains of a temple to Li Mu, a famous general during the late Warring States Period. Discrimination is alive and well here, with locals charged 8 yuan and others 12 yuan, obviously behind the times. To boost tourism, the local authorities have refurbished the tower of the Yanmenguan Pass. The Yanmenguan Pass is not on the main line of the Great Wall; its relationship to the Great Wall is somewhat like that between the Badaling Great Wall and the Juyongguan Pass. It looks over a north-south valley and was the main route for travel and commerce in ancient times. When warlord Yan Xishan ruled Shanxi in 1930s, a new road was built that circumvented the Yanmenguan

Pass, which became part of the 208 National Highway. While some parts seem treacherous, it hasn't affected the ultra busy traffic. The walls connecting Yanmenguan Pass and the main course of the Great Wall have now almost collapsed, to the point of being ignored by the majority of tourists.

In actual fact, the inner Great Wall already extends from Yangfangkou in the west to the Shanyin County's Xinguangwu to the north of the Yanmenguan Pass. This is the real direct frontier of the Great Wall. But even if enemies broke through the heavily defended Xinguangwu, the final frontier of Yanmenguan Pass was still almost impossible to conquer. Unfortunately Xinguangwu has already become a village with little or no planning to speak of. After withstanding the test of time and the damage wrought by humans, this part of the Great Wall is no longer the splendid structure it once was. However, as we were just about overwhelmed with disappointment, Jiuguangwu presented us



with a pleasant surprise. Not only are the city walls almost perfectly preserved, even the ironclad wooden gates of the city are still there, which is almost a miracle. Aside from those at the old city of Pingyao and Wanping in Beijing, we had no idea such immaculately kept old city walls still existed in north China. Unlike Pingyao, Jiuguangwu is only a village with 1,400 odd people; the combination of tiny town and well-preserved architecture is almost unheard of in China.

The section of the Great Wall between Baicaokou and the Xinguangwu is situated on the Hou'er Ling hill. Six watch towers have basically been kept in their original condition, of which four towers actually have five of their Ming Dynasty banner boards intact (three buildings have one gate while one building has two sets of gates) and two towers basically intact. It is extremely rare to find such well-kept architecture anywhere in China.

○Transport: Take the train initially to Daixian station in Shanxi Province, from where the township of Daixian County about 3 km away can be reached on foot.

1. A distant look at Jiuguangwu from Hou'er Ling
2. A beacon tower of the Ming Dynasty built atop a Han Dynasty tomb
3. Jiuguangwu is a village of only 1,400 people but enjoys a rich history





Past and Present of Qingdao's Old Buildings

Photos & article by Ning Luqiang

Qingdao City in Shandong Province, a former colony of Germany, has always taken great care to preserve its numerous century-old houses and buildings. As well as bearing testament to its history, these old buildings have made Qingdao a tourist city with a unique flavour – a small “Europe of the Orient” to the amazement of visitors.

After Germany occupied Qingdao in 1897, the Germans began to purchase land. They razed villages to the ground and demolished most of the traditional Chinese houses except two – the Tianhou Palace and the Office of the Regional Commander. A century later, those houses built by the Germans can tell us about big changes in Qingdao.

The European area faced the sea, with the governor-general's building in the centre, surrounded by the administrative buildings of the colonial government. There were also European shops, banks, hotels, schools and residences. The villa area was located by Huiquan Bay and included the residences of the governor-general and his adjutants, the



1. European-style buildings spread around the city of Qingdao
2. The temporary governor's residence built in 1899 on Fushan Road has since been demolished
3. The ward tower of the General Field Hospital built from 1899~1905 on Jiangsu Road is still well preserved, while its executive tower has been altered to serve as a subsidiary hospital of the Medical Faculty at Qingdao University
4. The structure of the Haibin Hotel built on Nanhai Road from 1903~1904 (or 1907) has been preserved and adapted to nowadays house the Huiquan Chinese Restaurant

supervisor-general of customs, and the German special envoy to China.

Qingdao was meant as a military base for Germany, so after the port, barracks, emplacements and other military facilities were constructed, the church, post office, railway station, slaughterhouse and brewery were also established, thus forming the basic layout of the city. Among its hordes of visitors are tourists, missionaries, or even specialists studying European architecture, and nostalgic Germans, as many of the old buildings in Germany itself were lost in the war.



Route of Touring Old Buildings in Qingdao

Stop ①: Qingdao Railway Station

Present use: Qingdao Railway Station

Location: Crossroads between Tai'an Road and Guangxi Road
(North of Zhanqiao Park)

Construction period: 1900 ~ Autumn / winter 1901

Construction of the Jiaoji Railway started in September 1899 and opened to traffic in June 1904. Qingdao Railway Station, the terminus of this railway, is an important gateway to Qingdao, boasting a 100-year-old history.

The railway station, built of bricks, wood, stone and reinforced with steel bars, is typical German Renaissance-style architecture. It consists mainly of a waiting lounge building and a bell tower.

In 1991, because of the construction of the Jiaoji double-track railway and expansion of the railway station, the original German structure was removed. In its place a new bell tower, three metres higher than the old one, was built up in a style consistent with the newly built waiting lounge building.



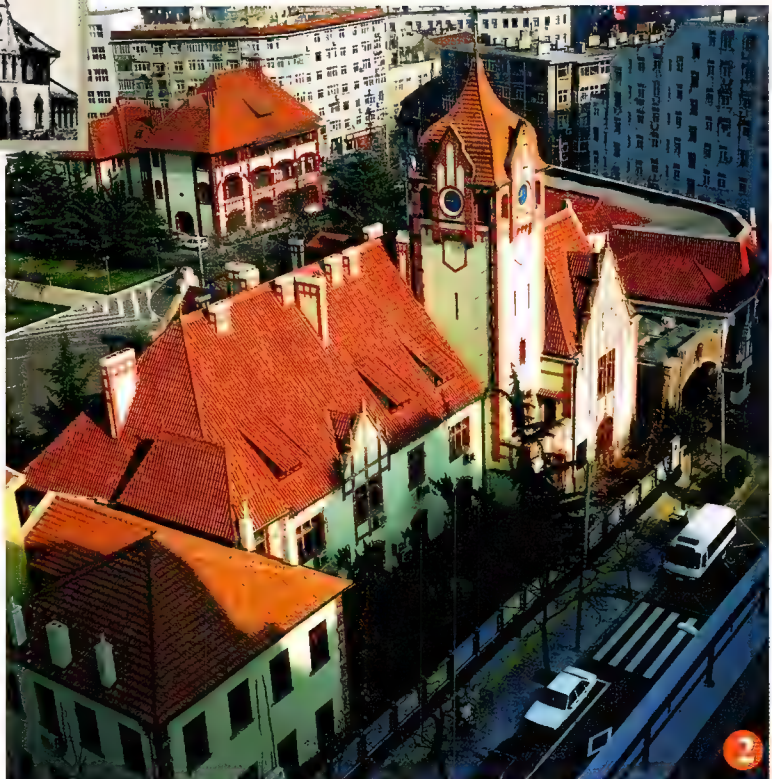
Stop ②: German Police Station

Present use: Qingdao Municipal Police Station

Location: Hubei Road

Construction period: 1904 ~ 1905

The former German Police Station is now the police station for Qingdao City. It has an ideal location on Hubei Road close to the railway station. The building faces the famous Zhanqiao Park, and is within 100 metres of Zhongshan Road, a prosperous business street in old Qingdao.



The main feature of the architecture is a six-storey tower in German Renaissance style. With huge granite blocks, bricks walls and a high, steep steeple, this grand building is one of the five bell towers in Qingdao. It used to house a Qingdao local court, police station and a prison.



Stop 3: Qingdao Club

Present use: Office of Qingdao Science & Technology Association

Location: Crossroads between Zhongshan Road and Taiping Road

Construction period: May 1910 ~ October 1911

The Qingdao Club occupies the best place in the city – the crossroads between Zhanqiao Park and the busy Zhongshan Road. German architects designed the club building in 1910 according to the style of the German Youth School. The simple and natural granite is used only for windowsills and cornices. It has two storeys only, but there is a big sloping tiled roof much higher than the second floor, forming an entrance to the top garden where there is an open bar. Another unique aspect of this building is that visitors arrive through the side gate. They have to pass down a long spacious corridor before going to the first floor at the end of the corridor. This was designed to serve a similar function to a screen wall in traditional Chinese architecture.

3



Stop 4: German Pharmacy

Former use: Red House Restaurant

Location: 33 Guangxi Road

Construction year: 1905

The Red House Restaurant acquired its name because the building is red. Originally a German medical store, it used to feature the most beautiful architecture in German Youth School style. Its red facade has a rough-cast finish, and coloured bricks form picturesque patterns. The two-storey design and curving chimneys are typical of the German Youth School.

In 1985, a five-storey building in total keeping with the city's German architecture rose beside the red house. It was the first such building designed by Chinese architects in Qingdao. The new building is similar to the red house in terms of architectural features and colour and so people often confuse the two.



Stop 5: German Jiaozhou Post Office

Present use: Qingdao Post Office

Location: Crossroads between Tai'an Road and Guangxi Road

Construction period: 1900 ~ 1901

The postal service run by the Germans in China was not used for ordinary postal transportation but was of key strategic importance to Germany. In 1899 the German Postal Ministry established the Jiaozhou Imperial Post Office and issued Jiaozhou stamps, its business managed by the Shanghai Postal Administration. The facade of this private business building was originally made of red bricks. Towers highlight the corners facing the street and tall side walls emphasise the sides of the building. The ground floor of this three-storey building serves as the post office. A pharmacy stands at its left. The second and third floors are used as apartments.



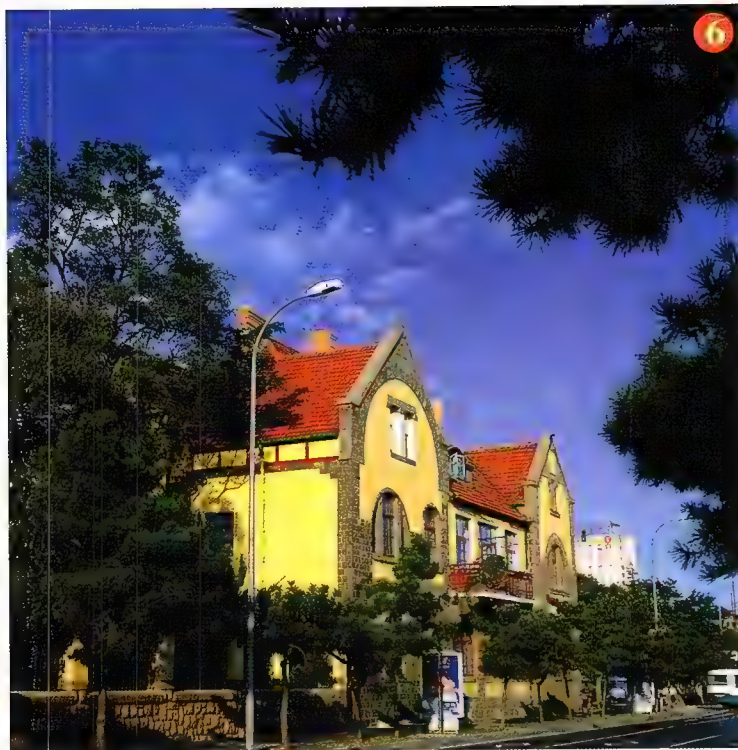
Stop 6: Headquarters of the Shandong Provincial Mining Company

Present use: Residential building

Location: Crossroads between Taiping Road and Jiangsu Road

Construction period: About 1902

According to historical data, the treaty of concession signed by China and Germany in 1898 gave Germany mining rights in a 15 km-wide corridor along the railway it built in Shandong Province, and those rights belonged to the Shandong Provincial Mining Company. The company's three-storey building completed in 1902 covers an area of 594 sq m. Designed with medieval-style entrances, the house is built of granite with cement rendering. The aspect facing the sea has a verandah and irregular windows.



Other Well-known German

St. Michael's Cathedral

If you walk along Dexian Road by the Governor-General's Office, to the northwest you will see high twin towers topped with two crosses. This is Qingdao's famous St. Michael's Cathedral. Facing south, the cathedral has a huge rose-shaped window at its entrance, flanked on each side by a clock tower crowned by a 4.5-metre cross. The sound of

the four bells ringing in the bell towers can be heard over a couple of miles away. The towers are higher than those on all other churches in China's northern cities, such as Beijing, Tianjin, Dalian and Jinan. They used to be the focus of Qingdao's cityscape, and can be seen clearly from the sea outside the harbour at Qingdao.





7

Stop 7: Governor-General's Office

Present use: Office of the Qingdao Political Consultative Conference

Location: 11 Yishui Road

Construction period: May 1904 ~ April 1906

The Governor-General's Office is a majestic and stately stone building in the European style of public architecture and cost more than any other German building in Qingdao. The outer walls were built from top quality, big granite blocks from the quarry close to Qingdao and dressed and carved by some 200 Chinese stonemasons. The spacious entrance hall, with a chandelier suspended from the ceiling, is grandiose. The second floor features a conference hall — used as a meeting place by various regimes. Access to the upper floors or down to the ground floor is from either end of the second floor. There is a square plaza in front of the building which is flanked by the Jiao'ao Court and the German consulate.

In less than 100 years, the Governor-General's Office changed hands from Germany to Japan, and then to the Chinese Government. The locals like to call it the "old city government".

Stop 8: Qingdao Church

Present use: Qingdao Church

Location: 15 Jiangsu Road

Construction period: 19 April, 1908 ~ 23 October, 1910

Qingdao Church is the largest and most famous among all the city's churches. Aligned on a north-south axis, its lower walls, window frames and eaves are all lined with mushroom granite blocks in various sizes. The view of the coastline from the church is one of the best in Asia. The nave is 18.01 metres high and large enough to hold 1,000 people. The 39.16-metre Bell Tower, referred to as the Bell House by the locals, has a mechanical clock set on it. The sharp contrast of its blue-green spire and the red tiles on the church create both a romantic and formal mood.



8

Landmarks in Qingdao

The Eight Famous Passes

The Eight Famous Passes, named after eight renowned mountain passes in China, are located in the quiet villa area. The Granite and Cobblestone Building is the most famous among the eight — a wonderful architectural work among Qingdao's old buildings. It is in the style of a European castle, but incorporates features of Greek, Roman and Gothic architecture. Built in 1913 by an exiled Russian aristocrat, it was a resting place for the governor-general when he was hunting. The design consists of a main round tower and some smaller angular buildings. The five-storeyed round tower has a platform on top for overlooking the sea and the beach.

Equally grand as the Granite and Cobblestone Building is the Princess' Tower on 10 Juyongguan Road.



8

Stop 9: Governor-General's Residence

Present use: Guest Welcoming Hall

Location: 26 Longshan Road

Construction period: October 1905 ~ October 1907

For tourists to Qingdao, a visit to the Guesthouse on 26 Longshan Road is a must. Originally an official residence of the German governor-general, it sits prominently against the picturesque Xinhao or Mt. Signal in an attractive environment. It was listed in 1996 by the State Council as a historical and cultural relic site under state protection.

The building took from 1905 to 1907 to complete at huge cost under the supervision of Strasser. The building material was mainly high quality granite from the Qingdao area. The four-storey mansion is 30 metres high, covering an area of 4,000 sq m with altogether 30 rooms of different sizes. The first floor features the nine-metre high main hall, decorated with a bronze relief mural. The dining hall is seven metres high, and its highlight is a luxurious crystal and copper chandelier weighing 1,000 kg. Standing in a corner is a green fireplace and a grand piano with ivory keys produced in Germany in 1876. The piano can still produce very high quality sound today. On the second floor are the family's bedrooms and the governor-general's office, also richly decorated. Guest rooms and servants' rooms are on the third floor. As the walls are made of light green and brick-red granite as well as pale yellow concrete, the building is colourful especially in the setting sun when its century-old simplicity appears even more graceful.

After the Kuomintang Government took over Qingdao in 1929, the Governor-General's Residence became the official residence of Qingdao mayors. It was not until 1934 that it was changed into a guesthouse. Since 1949, when Qingdao was liberated, most international VIPs and state leaders visiting Qingdao have been received here. Mao Zedong, Lin Biao, Chen Yun, Ho Chi Minh, and Norodom Sihanouk all stayed in this guesthouse.



Stop 10: Residence of Governor-General's Adjutant

Present use: Kang Youwei Memorial Hall

Location: 5 Fushan Branch Road

Construction period: 1899 ~ 1900

For a bird's-eye view of Qingdao's cityscape, the Small Fishing Hill Park is an ideal place. Standing on Tide View Pavilion, a pleasant panorama of red-tiled roofs and green water spreads before you. Then walking eastward along Fushan Branch Road by the park, you will see an old Western-style building with red tiles and yellow walls. This used to be the residence of the German governor-general's adjutant. In 1923 Kang Youwei, an influential figure in modern Chinese history, lived here in his old age, hence the name of the residence Tianyouyuan. It is now a Memorial Hall to Kang Youwei.

Next door to the former governor-general's residence, this building commands a wide vista of the bay and beach. The whole residence of 1,118 sq m is roofed with Chinese tiles and has an open corridor around the house. The protruding gateway at the main entrance and the veranda, like patchwork embellishing the architecture, manifest the building's grandeur. The kitchen and other subsidiary rooms are in the quadrangle courtyard at the back of the residence.

Stop 11: Illertissen Barracks

Present use: Navy Barracks

Location: Hong Kong Road West

Construction period: October 1899 ~ April 1901

The Illertissen Barracks, named after Mt. Illertissen (today's Mt. Taiping) to its north, is one of three German barracks in Qingdao. Overlooking the sea at the foot of the mountain, the barracks built in 1899 consists of two main buildings and other outbuildings. The granite buildings have dry walls with plaster jointing to emphasise certain areas. Typical of southern European architecture, the sloping roofs are red tiled, and the decorative gable wall is set only in the middle section of the buildings. Each building has an exquisite tapering tower. With two storeys above ground and one underground, the buildings on their northern side have wide and airy inner corridors with wooden floors that give a rich and formal look. Today's Huiquan Square in the southwest of the barracks used to be a drill ground a century ago.

After the fighting between Germany and Japan during the First

World War, the Illertissen Barracks were occupied by Japan and renamed Xubingying. In 1922 the Chinese government took it over and opened a school there. When the Japanese occupied it again in 1938, they changed it back to a barracks. After the defeat of the Japanese invaders, it became the barracks of the Kuomintang army. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it has been the barracks of the Chinese People's Navy, and the old buildings are well protected.



Travel Tips

○ **Transport** : Qingdao can be reached by direct flights from Tokyo, Osaka, Seoul, Singapore, Hong Kong, Macao, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Beijing and Shanghai. The Liting Airport is 32 km from the downtown city, about 40 minutes by airport shuttle bus for 10 yuan. A luxury taxi (an Audi, for example) charges about 60 yuan from the airport to the city, with a minimum of 10 yuan for the first 4 km, and an additional 1.6 yuan per kilometre thereafter. An ordinary taxi like a Xiali costs about 50 yuan, with a minimum fare of seven yuan, and an additional 1.1 yuan per kilometre after 4 km, and 1.65 yuan per kilometre after 8 km. Several buses – Nos. 101, 105, 103, 117 and 306 – also go from the airport to the city area, costing three yuan for the 50-minute drive.

○ **Accommodation** : For a better look at the old buildings, it's best to stay in the old city of Qingdao, preferably on Zhongshan Road because it is in the city's central area and easy for shopping and transport. You can stay in the three-star Qingdao Hotel, 53 Zhongshan Road, with a standard room for 180 yuan/day or above (Tel: 532-2898111). If you want to look at the city from a height, you can select the three-star Huanghai Hotel close to Small Fishing Hill Park at 75 Yan'an No.1 Road. Its standard room charge is 380 yuan/day or above according to available views (Tel: 532-2870215). The price may be higher in the hot tourist season from July to August.

○ **Dining** : As Qingdao is located at the junction of the Yellow Sea and the Bohai Sea, it has a jagged coastline and a multitude of harbours and bays. Its seafood, estimated to have reserves of about 30,000 tons, mainly include yellow-fin tuna, hairtail, porgy, eel, abalone, jellyfish, prawns, scallops and sea cucumber. The following restaurants are worth a visit for their fresh seafood.

Cuihuage Chinese Restaurant

Location: 48 Hong Kong Road West, inside Haitian Grand Hotel
Tel: 532-3871888

Dishes: An ordinary seafood dish costs about 30 yuan, while a top-grade dish costs over 100 yuan each. Specialties include Dried Scallop Steamed with Ham and Chinese Cabbage, Beijing-styled Stewed Sea Cucumber, and Two Flavours of Couple Crabs.

Chinese Restaurant in the Ocean Hotel

Location: 61 Hong Kong Road Middle

Tel: 532-5717888 Ext. 3202 or 3205

Specialties: Four Treasures Stewed in Pot, Ocean Cuttlefish and Sea Cucumber Balls, Clams Steamed with Eggs, and Stir-Fried Sliced Snail.

○ **Climate** : Qingdao has a wet climate in a warm temperate zone, with an average temperature of 12.2°C without much difference in the four seasons. The annual precipitation is 776 mm. The best time to visit Qingdao is from May to September.

One-day trip of the Old Buildings :

(From the west of the city) The Abattoir → Dehua Higher School → Railway Station → Railway Station Hotel → Police Station → German Pharmacy → German Jiaozhou Post Office → German Consulate → Dehua Bank → Prince Henry's Hotel → (from Zhongshan Road) Qingdao Club → Navy Restaurant → Catholic Church → Holy Abbey → Residence of Governor-General's Priest → Governor-General's Office → Royal Observatory → Weimar Church → Church of Berlin → Field Hospital → Qingdao Church → Governor-General's Residence → Bismarck Barracks → Alven's Residence → Residence of Governor-General's Adjutant → Seashore Restaurant → Illertissen Barracks → Granite and Cobblestone Building → Princess' Tower

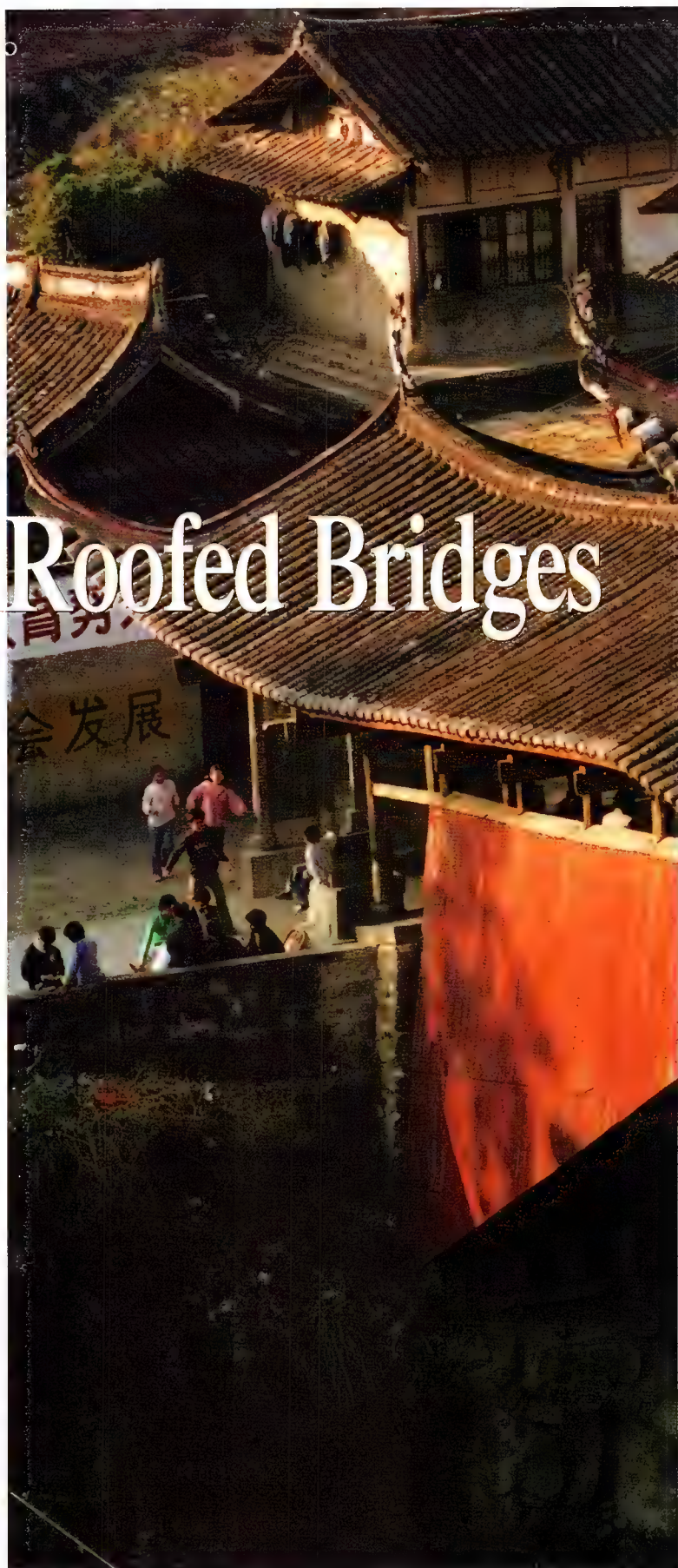


In Search of Old Roofed Bridges

Photos by Xiao Yunji Article by Zhang Qin

Many people became familiar with the concept of roofed bridges thanks to the movie "The Bridges of Madison County", based on the US novel of the same title. In China, this kind of bridge with roofs and walls to keep off the wind and rain has a variety of designs. During one rainy and misty May, we drove through the deep valleys along the border of Fujian and Zhejiang Provinces in search of the more than 200 beautiful ancient roofed bridges.

1. The Xianju Bridge before it was repaired
2. A gem among covered bridges in Fujian and Zhejiang, the Xidong Bridge spanning the Sixi River in Taishun County owns magnificent flying eaves



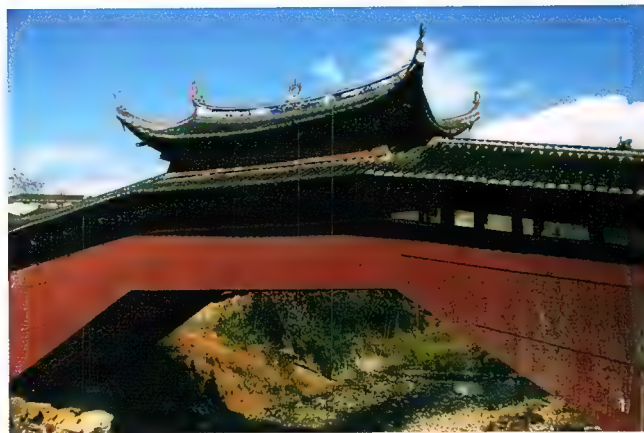


In China, roofed bridges consist of three main categories: arched wooden bridges, arched stone bridges and flat wooden bridges. Arched wooden bridges are a specialty of the mountainous regions of Fujian and Zhejiang and occupy an important place in the world's history of bridge building. In the early Ming Dynasty, Taishun, Qingyuan and Jingning counties in southern Zhejiang and Shouning in northern Fujian were well known for their various roofed bridges. Those in Taishun and Jingning were very narrow with seats built on one side and also with one side of the bridge half covered with boards. The wider bridges in Qingyuan and Shouning had wooden seats for people to sit down or even lie on. Both sides were totally closed off with boards except for small windows to admit light.

Sister Bridges — Witness the Ups and Downs of Local History

Lying southwest of Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province, Taishun is a mountainous region with a rich network of rivers and creeks. Historical documents record more than 900 bridges here. Of the 30-plus surviving bridges built during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, six are arched wooden structures, known among the local people as "centipede bridges". The Xidong Bridge, regarded as the finest of the ancient roofed bridges in the four counties, and Beijian Bridge were known as the Sister Bridges at Sixi. In a house west of the Beijian Bridge, an 81-year-old granny sat against a window and smiled as she chatted to us. While we spoke the Wenzhou dialect, she talked in Taishun dialect.

Her name is Weng Chun'e from a landlord family in Xiaocun Village. She married into the Tang family in Sixi when she was 18. As a major town in Taishun county, Sixi has always enjoyed a brisk economy. At



Arousing the Interest of Scholars

Academic studies of roofed bridges began some 50 years ago. The year 1959 saw the book *Historical Documents on Chinese Bridges* published, with Luo Ying as the chief editor. At the time, even Liang Sicheng, then a leading architect in China, believed the technology for building such bridges had long been lost. However in the late 1970s, arched wooden bridges were "discovered" in southern Zhejiang Province. Mao Yisheng, in his book *A History of Ancient Bridge Building Technology in China*, cited five bridges in Taishun and Qingyuan to support his view that the technology of arched bridge building of the Central Plain which was popular during the Northern Song Dynasty (960—1127) was not lost.

the time, her father-in-law made a clever decision and bought the three-bay house by the Beijian Bridge. Roofed bridges in Taishun County, if built in the wild mountains, became shelters for passers-by and, if built in villages or towns, immediately became centres of local activity. Those houses built next to the bridges were bound to become



profitable shops. She told us that every Spring Festival a puppet show troupe was invited by the town to perform on the bridge. Weng Chun'e simply sat in the attic of her house, brushed away the tree twigs in front of her window and watched the show to her heart's content.

In the 1950s, a highway was built not far from the Beijian Bridge, reducing the number of people crossing the bridge and business at her shop plummeted. Now she lives alone in the old house which once was a busy store.

Wenxing Bridge — Home to Trio of Gods

Roofed bridges are not only means to cross rivers but also centres of local culture. The Wenxing Bridge in Taishun County is different from other bridges in that its left and right sections are not identical. When viewed from afar, it looks like an eagle flying overhead with the left wing lower than the right. In the middle of the bridge is a shrine to three gods. Though the villagers are not clear exactly what the gods are supposed to be in charge of, they do visit the shrine on the first and 15th days of each month in the lunar calendar to light incense and pray.

A dilapidated brick house east of the bridge is the home of Granny Lei whose part-time job is to take care of the money for the upkeep of the gods on the bridge. She explained what the three gods really were and identified them for me one by one: "This



1. The Yuwen Bridge in Zhouling, Taishun County
2. The Xiaodong Bridge in Kengdi Township, Shouning County, Fujian
3. This kind of stone crossing is a primitive form of bridge. Stretching for 130 metres in Shiyang Town, Taishun County, it was first built in 1795. In 1989, it became listed as a cultural relic under provincial protection
4. The covered bridges in Qingyuan are mostly paved with pebbles to protect the surface. The added weight also helps to keep the bridge steady



Famous Bridges in Taishun County

Covered bridges in Taishun are very famous and the following are some of the best known.

- **Dongxi Bridge:** Also known as Xidong Bridge, located in the northwestern part of Sixi Town. Forty metres long, 6 metres wide and with a main arch spanning 23 metres, the bridge was first built in 1570. It was rebuilt in 1745 then repaired in 1986. With a palace-like roof of upturned flying eaves and a double-eaved pavilion in the middle, the wooden bridge also boasts beautiful paintings of dragons on the inside.
- **Beijian Bridge:** Not far away from the Dongxi Bridge, and together they are known as the Sister Bridges. Beijian was first built in 1674 and rebuilt in 1803. Its structure is very similar to that of the Dongxi Bridge. Ancient camphor trees more than 1,000 years old stand by the bridge, adding glamour to the beautiful environment.
- **Xuezhai Bridge:** In the northern part of Sankui Town, it used to be known as the Jinxi Bridge. Supported by an inverted Y shaped structure, the wooden bridge is 145 years old. It is 51 metres long, 5 metres wide and the main arch spans 28.3 metres. It is 16 metres above the water level, making it the highest bridge in Taishun County. Lacking steps, the surface of the bridge is rather slippery. With many houses standing in its vicinity, the bridge's environment is not ideal.
- **Yuwen Bridge:** This arched stone bridge with a wooden roof and walls south of Zhouling Town has a pavilion with three levels of eaves in the middle. Though small in size, it is really an architectural treasure.
- **Wenxing Bridge:** Straddling the Yuxi River, the 46.2-metre-long and 5-metre-wide bridge was first built in the Qing Dynasty. Its single arch spans 29.6 metres and is 11.5 metres above the river. The bridge consists of 16 bays of rooms sealed with wood. Located some 2 km from Xiaocun Town, it is accessed through a village beside a highway. As a result it cannot be seen from the highway.
- **Xianju Bridge:** Located in Xiannian (originally Xianju), this large wooden bridge is 10 km northeast of Luoyang Town.



one is in charge of the entire world. This one only takes charge of domestic affairs while the one on the left is the god of land." On the altar was a container for bamboo chips, an oil bottle and incense.

Bridge Builders in Shouning

In Shouning County, there are 19 arched wooden bridges built during the early 18th to the early 20th century. However the last one, closed off entirely with wooden boards, was built in 1967. At Kengdi Township in Shouning, we saw Mr. Zheng Duojin, a veteran carpenter experienced in bridge building.

Born in 1928 into a family of carpenters, he began at the age of 19 to build bridges with his father Zheng Huifu. One day his father said to him: "I am getting old and you are an adult. You should stop following me around to build bridges. Now you build this one!" It was the Yangxitou Bridge completed in 1967, and the only bridge Zhen Duojin built entirely by himself. People in Shouning say it probably is the last arched wooden bridge built in China. Since then, highway bridges have been erected in the mountainous regions of Fujian and Zhejiang, putting bridge builders like Zheng out of work.

During his lifetime, Zheng Huifu taught more than 100 people how to build bridges but his eldest son Zheng Duojin was the only one of his seven sons he passed his bridge building skills on to. It was not only hard work but also was a risky business for many lost their lives when bridges collapsed. Today, most of his former apprentices, more than a dozen of whom are still alive, are in their seventies. Zheng Duojin was 74 at that time. Every day he enjoyed talking with his youngest brother aged 50, in the hope he would carry on the skill of wooden bridge building.

Lanxi Bridge and Gushen Temple

The Rulong Bridge in Qingyuan County is the only arched wooden bridge listed as a key cultural relic site under state protection. Standing in Yueshan Village at Jushui Town, the structure combines a bridge with a tower and pavilion to create a symbol of elegant magnificence. It forms a harmonious whole with the Lanxi Bridge and the Gushen

(Mushroom God) Temple and is a living testimony to the richness of the local culture.

The beautiful Songyuan River is a busy tourist spot. We made our way across the long Lanxi Bridge and entered the Mushroom God Temple. Originally Qingyuan County was known as the "Home of Mushrooms", as it was the place where people began to grow mushrooms in China. To commemorate Wu Sangong, the man believed to be the first to cultivate mushrooms, people had this temple built. Wu was said to be from Longyan Village in Qingyuan County in the early Southern Song Dynasty. Throughout the year, he lived in

highland forests, hunting and quarrying. By accident, he found mushrooms growing on broad-leaved trees where he had cut with his axe, and consequently invented the method of growing mushrooms on felled logs.

Despite the hard work needed to

grow the mushrooms, income from it was low. For the poverty-stricken population in the mountains, however, mushroom growing was one more way to eke out a living.

In the late 1970s, when new methods for cultivating mushrooms began to spread, mushroom growers stopped their migratory lifestyle as they no longer had to travel to the forests. But they still maintain their trust and respect for Wu Sangong. In the past, their wives were even more regular visitors to the temple across the Lanxi Bridge. In those days their husbands were away from home for several months of the year, and the temple became a place for the housewives to seek comfort from their worries and longing for their menfolk.

Dadi Bridge — Warehouse for Coffins

Dadi Village lies at the junction of three rivers. We rode on bamboo rafts, and walked along mountain paths overgrown with grass before we set foot on Dadi Bridge. Several snakes, surprised by our arrival, rustled away. More scary, however, was the sight in front of us: the bridge a little over 50 metres long was packed with coffins. It instantly sent a chill down my spine.





There happens to be inhabited entirely by Han people whose custom it is to have their coffins made once they reach the age of 50. The empty coffin, however, must not be left at home. Instead it should be stored in a makeshift hut at a point higher than the family's pigsty. After a road was built to link the village with the outside world, the bridge virtually fell into disuse. Someone then took the lead in removing the seats from the bridge and placed his coffin there. Soon other villagers followed suit and the bridge became a warehouse for empty coffins. Villagers have got used to the sight these days. On top of an empty coffin, someone has put a wooden box for growing mushrooms. In fact, several families have done the same.

There are more than 30 households in Dadi Village engaged in farming and mushroom cultivation. Village children often come to the

bridge to play by the coffins and sometimes even climb on top of them. As the empty coffins are tightly sealed, the kids can't open them, no matter how hard they try. Elderly villagers often go to the bridge too, especially on rainy days, to check out if the roof is leaking rainwater on to their coffins.



Translated by Huang Youyi

1. The Dachikeng Bridge in Dajun Town, Jingning County
2. The long gallery of the Yonghe Bridge in Anren Town, Longquan County
3. The Rulong Bridge and the Gushen (Mushroom God) Temple in Yueshan Village, Jushui Town. Combining the structures of tower, bridge and pavilion, the bridge is the only one of its kind listed as a cultural relic under state-level protection in China
4. The Laifeng Bridge opposites the Rulong Bridge
5. Decorative paintings on the Yonggui Bridge in Qingyuan County

Transportation

- **To Taishun:** Travellers have the option of starting from Wenzhou, or Lishui in Zhejiang Province or Fu'an in Fujian Province. There are more shuttle bus services in Wenzhou than the other two places.
Wenzhou — Taishun: Bus fare: 40 yuan for a 4~5 hour drive; Wenzhou — Sixi: Bus fare: 36 yuan for a 4-hour drive
Wenzhou — Sankui: Bus fare 30 yuan for a 4-hour drive; Sixi — Xiaocun — Luoyang (county seat for Taishun): There are 4 to 5 shuttle buses each day. The fare from Sixi to Xiaocun is 8 yuan and the drive takes about an hour. To go from Xiaocun to Kengbian to see the Wenxing Bridge, you can catch a bus heading for Wencheng or hire a taxi. The bus fare is one to two yuan. The bus from Xiaocun to Luoyang costs 7 yuan and takes about an hour.
Luoyang — Xiannian: You can catch a bus heading for Siqian or Baizhang but don't take the route through the Hongyan Tunnel. The fare is two yuan and the drive is about half an hour. To return, simply hail the bus at the bridge.
Luoyang — Sankui: A frequent service with the last bus leaving at 5:00 p.m. The fare is 5 yuan and the drive is about 50 minutes.
Sankui — Shiyang: A frequent service with the last bus at 4:00 p.m. The fare is 4 yuan and the journey takes about 35 minutes.
- **To Shouning:** Regular buses run between Luoyang and Shouning with the last service at 5:00 p.m. The fare is 12 yuan and the drive is two hours.
- **To Qingyuan:** There is a daily bus service between Shouning and Qingyuan leaving at 6:20 a.m. The daily bus service from Taishun to Qingyuan leaves at 12:20 p.m. while many buses go between Lishui in Zhejiang and Songxi in Fujian to Qingyuan.
- **To Jingning:** A bus leaves Qingyuan for Jingning at 5:20 a.m. and 12:20 p.m. every day.



How can a columnist suddenly change to being a hit anchorman on TV travel shows, a gourmet guide, or even tour leader and consultant on luxury tours? Is it a matter of his outgoing personality or just luck?



FUNNY Lee Shun Yan

Photos & article by Dianna Lau



I had never interviewed Lee Shun Yan before. Some people think he is sophisticated and knows how to make people warm to him; some say he has his own temperament and does not easily compromise for others.

I arrived at the elegant cafe lounge of the Grand Hyatt Hotel feeling quite nervous, so I chose a seat with nice sunshine and views, and tried to compose myself while waiting for my interview guest.

"Hi, are you Ms. Lau?" a loud voice came from behind me. Lee sat down quickly and indicated a pot of flowers, "Aren't they beautiful!" His casual smile disarmed me and I started the interview in a relaxed fashion.

■ From Writer to Traveller

Most people have a romantic image of a writer, he should have a reserved manner, work hard from dawn to dusk and be lonely and poor. You'd have difficulty trying to apply such criteria to Lee. The man sitting in front of me is wearing a black leather jacket, modern thin frame glasses and using a most trendy design of mobile phone. Not to mention the sweep of white hair falling across his forehead.

Chatting with him, I find he is really humorous and smart. So why has he crossed over to the travel industry?

Before moving totally into the travel sector, Lee was a thoroughly busy and prominent figure in the mass media, with a full schedule of work every day. He said he yearned for a job that allowed Saturdays off. Applying for annual leave, he pretended to be a retired person at home to experience a life of doing nothing. However, he soon became bored to death. And since there was the little matter of a family to provide for, he soon abandoned the idea of retiring early.

Then one day after an argument with the company he was working for, he resigned, and became a true "individual". He started to write articles from home. Very soon, new doors opened to him. About a year ago, a travel agency he had previously worked with on an episode of a TV travel show invited him to become the company's consultant and tour leader. He is now responsible for designing deluxe tours featuring high-class dining and accommodation. These tours are usually at least twice the cost of ordinary package tours. For instance, a two-day, one-

night gourmet tour to Macao costs HK\$1,700. The same kind of tour to Japan (5 days, 4 nights) can cost as much as HK\$ 18,888.

■ A Professional Traveller's Life

"Are you satisfied working for the travel agency? Is it difficult being a tour leader?"

"Of course, I'm satisfied with the job. Luckily for me, all the tour members are very good to me. I led 12 tours last year, visiting Japan, Thailand, Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou and Macao...and so on, and got to know more than 600 tour members. Some of them have joined my tours five times. By now we've all become friends. Away from work, we'll have tea together. Sometimes I meet difficult guests. If they criticise me unreasonably, I won't hold back either. Usually, however, before I speak out other tour party members come to my rescue and calm things down."

"Are these luxury tours all designed by you? How do you do it?"

"In fact, the most important part of my job is planning the itinerary for luxury tours, and to check out the routes in advance for the travel agencies. If the agency intends organising tours to Japan, I may have to investigate the places first and visit those top-class hotels and restaurants recommended by the agencies. I will abide by my own standards but try to see things from a tourist's point of view. I hope to broaden the travel experience. But in order not to make it too serious, it might be appropriate to start with dining culture. Take a Shanghai banquet for example, there's a story related to certain people behind every dish. It may require special preparations and eating methods. If we know more about the dishes while eating them, it can whet our appetite, and the meal will become more memorable."

"Where do you get such dining information?"

"Mostly from other people. Whenever I go to shoot travel programmes for TV, I like to talk with the locals. If I hear interesting and practical information, I make a note of it and this always gives me inspiration."

"What do you do if the places recommended by travel agencies don't come up to your expectations?"

"If I'm the agency's selling point, I have to be responsible for the



tours' quality, to prevent damaging my reputation. Many restaurant owners treat me especially well, hoping I'll promote their dishes. But I must be careful, and must pay for myself. I'll only promote them if I'm satisfied. Sometimes I have to taste five meals a day, and I lose all appetite for food."

"How much time does each inspection take? Are they all arranged by you?"

"The time is usually tight. I have to investigate hotels and restaurants while jotting down notes and comments. It's totally different from having a holiday. Whenever I go, I'm helped by some people, including an assistant from the travel agency, a driver, and a translator."

■ A Comfortable Job

A job related to travel always arouses people's interest and even envy. As an editor of a travel magazine, I'm constantly offered the chance to visit different famous scenic spots. Although the trips have sometimes been hard work, people may think I'm very lucky to have the opportunity to travel free of charge. Lee's style of luxury travel must look even more attractive.

"I like playing the tourist role or leading friends on tours. I enjoy being with my fellow tour members. When dining, I take an active part and introduce each dish to them."

"Does your family go with you?"

"My wife and daughter sometimes go on trips with me, just like a family holiday. My daughter always says I'm lucky to have found such a comfortable job."

■ Hunting for Ideas Takes Skill

"If you're not satisfied with a restaurant during the inspection, how do you find a better one in limited time? Can you explain this for us?"

"It really is a matter of intuition and luck. Once on an inspection in Japan, the travel agency had arranged seven restaurants for me, but I was happy with only four of them. I had visited the 187-year-old Higashi Chaya-gai in Kanazawa which was untouched by the war. Among the many restaurants in the district, I happened upon one that looked unsophisticated from the outside yet had an extremely modern

decor. The owner aimed to promote traditional Japanese geisha culture in a new guise. I immediately grabbed the chance to talk to him. Then I found out the maximum his restaurant could hold

was only 20 diners. But from him I learnt there were some other similar quality restaurants nearby. This way is much more reliable than trying to find places myself. Thanks to his recommendation, I found a sashimi restaurant located among the hills in Asakusa Village where one can enjoy beautiful views all year round. So, try your best to talk to locals who have the same interests as you, then you can always get practical tips. It's also good if you can meet some taxi drivers who are fond of dining. They especially have lots of ideas and are familiar with the local areas, which can save you much time."

■ Room for Improvement in Mainland Tourism

"What insights have you had after entering the tourist industry?"

"From the market perspective, though the Hong Kong economy is depressed, many Hong Kongers are still dining buffs. There's a huge potential for gourmet tours. Once, we released an advertisement for a gourmet tour to Shanghai in the morning, and it was already fully subscribed in the afternoon, and we had to add another tour. The tour members' ages ranged from two to 80 years old. However, since there's keen competition in the industry, some tours sacrifice quality in order to get a lower price. I've heard of a seven-day package tour to East China that booked guests to fly with a lesser known airline to bring the cost down to just over a thousand dollars. The tourists had to arrive at Hefei in Anhui Province first and then take a six-hour bus ride to Nanjing. My goodness, where's the fun in going on a holiday if you are tired out from just getting there?"

"How do the people and things in different places strike you?"

"Take Japan and the mainland for instance. The Japanese are very conservative and rooted in their traditions. If the opening time of the unit is 10 a.m., they won't break the rule even if there are early customers waiting outside. Nevertheless, Japan is an orderly place which gives us a sense of security. This is important for our luxury tours. In contrast, there are many places on the mainland whose management still has much room for improvement. For example, a



luxury hotel might still have stains on the carpet; only the outermost layer of the curtains is clean, the inner ones are all wrinkled; or the sugar syrup for coffee in an upmarket cafe can be as tasteless as boiled water. In fact, there's great potential for developing gourmet tours in mainland China. It will definitely have an excellent future if matched with good management."

"How about the class of the people?"

"This is the most difficult question. Lots of businessmen only focus on money when developing tourism on the mainland. I once had to go to a seafood restaurant in Hainan Island. When I didn't order seafood, the owner looked at me disdainfully. Eventually, I felt obliged to order that expensive seafood. On a visit to a newly-developed scenic site in Sichuan, rubbish was everywhere outside the ancient town, while the ticket seller sat knitting. Very unprofessional. There was a mass of motorcycles hassling tourists. All of these are down to inadequate management. Not just the locals though, sometimes tourists themselves are at fault. I have seen some Chinese tourists rudely shout at the service staff in a hotel lobby in Japan, which embarrassed me. I was almost suffocated by a compatriot's smoke in a casino in Macao. There are also hypercritical Hong Kong tourists who always demand compensation over little problems. After all, we too still have room for improvement."

■ Promoting "Slower Lifestyle Culture"

I had long thought Hong Kong's economy was depressed and people's consumer power had generally dropped. But after talking with Lee for an afternoon I realized there is a group of people, an important source of clients for luxury tours, who have earned enough,

are ready to retire, and have no idea where to spend their money. Apart from gourmet tours to Southeast Asia, will Lee open up some new itineraries?

"I intend to visit places like France, Italy, and Australia to investigate new routes for wining, dining and shopping. I especially want to promote a slower lifestyle culture to Hong Kong people. They've become too highly strung and bad-tempered in recent years, it's time for them to relax and enjoy life."

"Apart from the job, what kind of travelling do you like? Do you still want luxury travel?"

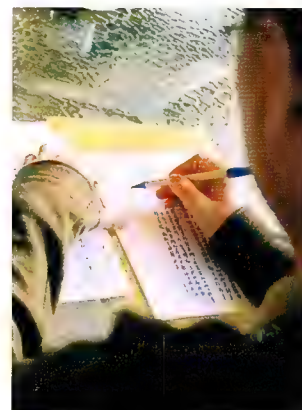
"Haha! I must have been spoiled by this job, and got used to staying in deluxe business suites. I can eat simply but I must stay in a good place on a trip, as I like writing articles in the hotel room at night. I can't bear hardship like you."

Besides being a tour leader, Lee still writes columns for newspapers and magazines, and has published culinary guides to a number of places. Recently he has also become an anchorman for a travel series for a Shanghai broadcasting station, travelling through Hong Kong, Macao, and Singapore.

Travel may have broadened Lee's social circle, but he has extended our travel horizons, so we are the ones who benefit in the long run.

Towards the end of the interview, Lee touched on plants again. One day last autumn while going along a street in Osaka lined with silver birches, a sudden breeze blew down a shower of autumn leaves through the air. He was enveloped in golden flakes, what a poetic scene!

©



NOTES

After this interview, I wholly agree that Lee is a man with a truly sincere character. He knows just when to say the right words. His easy-going nature puts you at your ease.

Two examples of his directness surprised me during the interview. The first was a question he asked 90 minutes after the interview began: "What is the exact purpose of this interview?" I was so absorbed in the conversation I had forgotten to tell him.

And later, when we had been talking for another two hours and I had forgotten the tyranny of time, he stood up suddenly and said with a smile: "I have to go."

A Day Watching Chinese White Dolphin

Photos by Samuel Hung Article by Kit Chu



*Time: 1:05 p.m. on a late summer's day
Place: Seas around Lung Kwu Chau, northern Lantau Island
Climate: Amber rainstorm warning signal*

"Wah! One more!" "See, it's jumping!" People are cheering here and there, while camera shutters click constantly. Adults and children alike wear bright smiling faces though wet with rain. No one imagined it could be this easy to watch the White Dolphin so close to suburbia!

As a mascot of the return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty, the Chinese White Dolphin's public profile is high. Yet, it seems more like a beautiful legend. Do these creatures really exist? Are they gentle, proud, bold or active? What is their life like in the ocean? On a quest for answers, I joined a white dolphin-watching tour led by a Hong Kong eco-tourism organisation.

Undeterred by Rainstorm Warning

On the day we set off, influenced by an unstable air current, an amber rainstorm warning signal was issued early in the morning by the Hong Kong Observatory. Seeing the grey skies, I thought the tour would be cancelled. However the organiser announced that all tours would proceed on schedule. By 11:30 a.m. though it was still raining, a large eager group, brimming with enthusiasm, had already gathered in the Citygate Plaza at Tung Chung (which can be reached by the MTR).

We boarded at the Tung Chung Pier and our boat headed for the seas off northern Lantau Island. We were all summoned to the upper cabin. Tour leader Samuel Hung, general supervisor of the Hong Kong Cetacean Research Project, introduced the leading character of the tour. "Who knows the real name of the Chinese White Dolphin?" We were all reduced to silence — "Isn't it just called the Chinese White Dolphin?" "No, the academic name is Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*). 'Chinese White Dolphin' is just a name given by the local Chinese." How surprising!

In the wild, the Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin is not confined to Hong Kong waters. The species is found in coastal seas around South Africa, the Indian Ocean to the west, South China Sea to the east, as well as northern Australia to the south. Moreover, not all of these dolphins are white or pink. Those born around northern Australia and South Africa are somewhat greyer. The ones seen in Hong Kong may seem comparatively more attractive.

The first historical record in the west of the Chinese White Dolphin



was made in 1637 by explorer Peter Mundy, who left a detailed description of a White Dolphin seen in the Pearl River Estuary. Chinese records of the creature date from historical documents of the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907). In the early Qing Dynasty, legends grew up around Guangdong Province that White Dolphins were reincarnations of sailors who had perished at sea. Local fishermen would keep a distance from this “white taboo” or “sea pig”. But in Xiamen, Fujian Province, local fishermen respect the dolphin as “Mazu fish” because the dolphins frequent the Jiulong (Nine Dragons) River area in spring when people start paying tribute to Mazu (Goddess of the Sea). The locals think the dolphins come to pay their respect to Mazu. Since the sea is usually calm when they appear, they are also revered as “pacifying river fish”.

Samuel explained that the White Dolphin had lived in Hong Kong waters for several hundred years. They like to live where salt and fresh waters mix. They mostly appear west of Hong Kong, including the north, south and west of Lantau Island, Hau Hoi Wan and Tai O. The best places to see them are at North Lantau and Tai O. Their population varies seasonally, with recorded sightings ranging from a low of 45 in spring to a high of 152 in summer. Thus most dolphin-watching tours are held during summer. Our trip set a course from Tung Chung for the sites where the dolphin most often appear: Great and Small Mo Dou Chau, Chek Lap Kok Airport, Tsing Shan Electricity Plant, Lung Kwu Chau, Sha Chau and finally Tai O.

Most of the more than 100-strong party were youngsters, though there were also a few older people and families. Samuel repeatedly emphasised we had to behave like guests in the dolphins’ domain, to respect them and not damage their habitat.

Sighting Dolphins Several Times

After the brief introduction, Samuel and his assistant came to the boat’s bow, looking for dolphin shadows. The rain had greatly reduced visibility. A few of us followed them in the hope of glimpsing the mysterious dolphin as soon as possible. When we saw the Tsing Shan Power Plant through a shroud of rain and mist, some of us began to doubt we would see any dolphins. “It’ll be impossible to see a dolphin, won’t it?” an old man of about 70 years said. Deeply impressed by a dolphin-watching trip in the Maldives, he joined our trip when he heard



about a similar tour in Hong Kong. Having had years of experience in observing dolphins, Samuel replied, “Not sure.” He scanned the sea without a telescope or other aids. This created a funny picture with his female assistant standing beside him keeping watch with a super telescope.

After a while, someone on the boat suddenly cried out: “Hey, is that the fin of a dolphin?” All of us were extremely excited and looked in the direction he pointed. But to our disappointment it was only a pink plastic bag floating on the sea. Again and again, what we thought was our quarry was only man-made rubbish. I could not help feeling guilty for the pollution we dumped on the passive, helpless marine world. Time passed slowly, and still we had not seen a dolphin. One of the party then suggested attracting them with food. Samuel was upset and sternly said: “We must never do that. A dolphin is born in the wild, and has its own way of hunting for food. Besides our food may not be suitable for them. It will only result in pollution or cause health problems for them.”

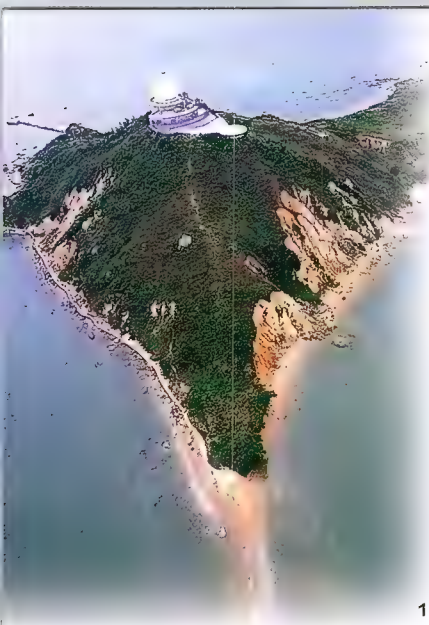


1. Chinese White Dolphin usually swim in pods, but they change around
2. Leaping above the waves is one of the dolphin’s favourite feats
3. The boat should stop when a dolphin is sighted, allowing it to swim closer if it wants
4. Dolphin watching has become a popular eco-tourism activity in Hong Kong in recent years. But it may harm the species if people don’t follow strict rules

Dolphin Watch Memo:

1. Watching season: The White Dolphin can be watched all year round in Hong Kong. The largest number of dolphins can be found in summer but guided by experienced tour leaders, people can appreciate the dolphins in any season.
2. Chances of seeing dolphins: Depends on the weather and size of waves. Usually poor visibility and big waves will lower the chances of seeing a dolphin. But there is still a possibility.
3. Gear: Casual wear, sun oil, sunglasses, or pills to stop seasickness.
4. If you find any stranded dolphins, no matter whether they are alive or not, immediately call the 24-hour hotline of the Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department: 2377 1661/ 7116 3898 (call 3029).
5. Reference readings or website:
 - Chinese White Dolphin. Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department. 2nd edition, April 2002. Price: HK\$ 38.
 - Hong Kong Discovery. Issue 13. Nov.–Dec. 2002.
 - Official website for Chinese White Dolphin at the Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department: www.chinese-white-dolphin.net/





Jumping Wins Applause

At about 1 p.m., the boat passed the Lung Kwu Chau Marine Park. Just when lots of us thought there was no hope of seeing any White Dolphin, the tour leader who had been standing in the bow all the time suddenly slapped the rail, exclaiming he definitely saw a dolphin. "Where is it?" We turned to scan the broad sea, having no idea. "Over there!"

He immediately entered the cabin and informed the rest of us with the loud speaker. Only by narrowing our eyes could we locate the moving fins of a few pink dolphin far away in the sea off Lung Kwu Chau.

When all of us were called to one side of the boat, the captain has already steered closer to the dolphins. In the restless waves, two dolphins, one big and one small, jumped and played. I almost couldn't believe my eyes. Finally the White Dolphin that I'd seen on TV or in books was alive in front of me. They are so cute and energetic! We all cheered and excitedly took photos of them, capturing those precious moments.

"Why is the smaller one grey in colour?" one of us asked. "Well, the new-born babies of the White Dolphin are grey. The grey colour

will fade gradually as it grows up. When it becomes adult, its body is silver white, sometimes with greyish dots. When they swim, the blood flows faster under the skin, making them look pink, like our face turning red." Samuel continued, "They might be mother and son or daughter, and the mother is teaching the youngster to swim." The two dolphins were swimming happily a certain distance around our boat. The lovely baby dolphin was closely following its mother, chasing the wind and waves.

Soon someone spotted another two dolphins. "3 o'clock, 3 o'clock!" The smart teammates quickly relayed the bearing. We turned in the direction of three o'clock. Yes, we saw two carefree pink dolphins chasing each other. Suddenly one of them jumped high in the air, twisting its body, and dived beautifully into the water, sending up a large shower of spray. The movement won deafening applause from us. Perhaps they knew we were friendly, as they began to swim closer. As well as sometimes popping up their heads to watch us, they "performed" many high jumps, making all of us happy. Hung told us that dolphin often jump high in the air for play, to frighten fish or relieve itches on their bodies. When we applauded, the dolphin opened their mouths, as if responding to our praise. They must have an intelligent soul, thought I.

"12 o'clock!" "2 o'clock!" The search for dolphins continued for



Dolphin Protector – Samuel Hung



"Although there is still quite a number of them, if we do nothing, one day they may be extinct." The 26-year-old general supervisor of the Hong Kong Cetacean Research Project Samuel Hung sounded serious when talking about protecting the Chinese White Dolphin. As he said, many people think the White Dolphin is only a cartoon character or extinct in Hong Kong. They are wrong. "Recently, there were more than 100 White Dolphin in Hong Kong waters, not a small number. We also predict they will not be threatened with extinction in the foreseeable future. However, they are facing different risks every day, such as being accidentally caught by fishermen, ramming by ships, water pollution, sailing of ships, noise produced from underwater constructions, restricted habitat because of reclamation, and so on.

Sponsored by the Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department, the project has been ongoing for seven years. A dolphin lover since childhood, Hung was appointed by Dr. Thomas Jefferson who then worked for the department, to take over the project in 1998 after obtaining a Master's Degree in Marine Life in California, USA. "The dolphin is a very smart, friendly, yet mysterious animal. It has given me unlimited space to know about it. They have different personalities but all are sensitive to others' responses. To a certain extent, I think there is a connection between them and human beings." He and his two assistants sail out two to three times a week to check the distribution and population of the dolphins, as well as take photos of them. They take a helicopter once a month to search for dolphin from the sky covering a wide expanse of water in a short time. They also observe the White Dolphin by standing on a coastal highland with a high magnification telescope, to record their habits and activities. Results from the research will be handed to the Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation

Department for reference, for drafting various policies or measures to protect the dolphin, such as dolphin watching rules for the tourism industry.

In the last couple of years, a dolphin watching fever has struck Hong Kong. The Chinese White Dolphin has become a favourite target of locals and tourists. Under this wave of popularity, some poor quality dolphin watching tours were set up, which passed inaccurate knowledge to the public, as well as severely disturbing the dolphins. "They actually don't know how to find the dolphin. Whenever they find them, they speed up the boat towards them. So the dolphins are frightened and swim away. Once during the peak watching period in summer, I saw five or six dolphin watching boats chasing the same group of dolphins at the same time. It was really horrible."

For those planning to join dolphin watching tours, Hung reminded us again: "One should join a tour which is based on education, not focused on entertainment and quick turnover. Before you enroll on the tour, try to find out how much they know about the Chinese White Dolphin, and whether the tour strictly follows dolphin watching rules."



The most impressive experience to Samuel Hung is the anatomy of a Bryde's whale which was stranded in Macao. He has never seen such a huge animal before.



quite a while, and our eyes were busy looking for them. This time, we saw six. Our boat stopped and let them swim closer then leave without chasing them. When we are on the sea, we have to respect the dolphin and appreciate them from a distance, to minimise our impact and give a good impression to them.

Dolphin Watching a Matter of Experience

Having watched the dolphin for almost half an hour, we reluctantly left them and headed to Tai O. Who knows, we might discover another pod where the salty and fresh water meet near the Tai O pier. Samuel said there were actually quite a large number of White Dolphins around Hong Kong, and it wasn't difficult to see them if one knew how to find them. Experience was the key. "When you have observed them for a long time, you become familiar with their ways of putting in an appearance, and won't mistakenly think rubbish or waves are their fins." That is why he did not need a telescope when looking for dolphin.

After taking a rest in Tai O, we came to the end of the trip. As we returned, a teammate called Eva told me she had heard about the Chinese White Dolphin before, but had never seen one so close up or imagined how lovely they were. Another woman, May, said she wanted to further protect the dolphin after seeing them for the first time.

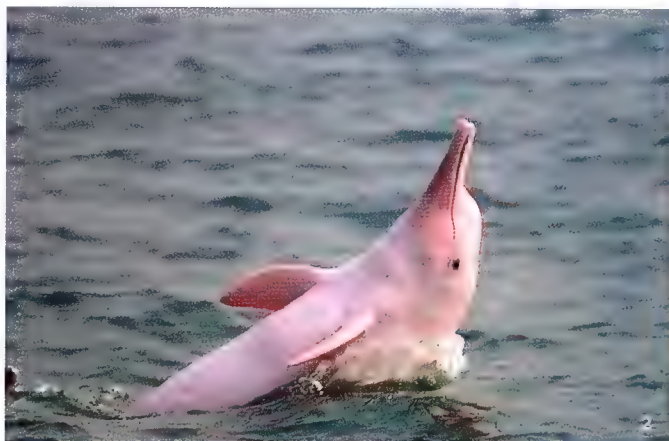
Isn't that the ultimate purpose of dolphin watching?



Essential Rules When Watching Dolphins:

- After sighting dolphins, lower the speed of the boat or stop it. Never change course suddenly. Keep the speed below 10 knots;
- There can only one dolphin-watching boat within an area of 500 metres at a time;
- Don't head straight for a dolphin, approach obliquely;
- Don't chase or pass over the routes where the dolphins are swimming, and don't split a group or separate a mother and baby;
- Don't try to touch, feed, or swim with the dolphins;
- Don't throw rubbish, or any waste fuel or pollutants into the sea;
- Do respect the dolphins. Let them choose to come closer or not to the boat.

1. White Dolphins frequent the seas around Sha Chau on northern Lantau Island, listed as marine park with Lung Kwu Chau
2. Raising its head is a favourite move of White Dolphins, and fully reflects their active character
3. The reclamation project at Penny's Bay has not only limited dolphin activity but has worsened pollution, posing a considerable threat to the dolphins
4. Researchers at the Hong Kong Cetacean Research Project collect samples from a dead black finless porpoise, another marine mammal other than the White Dolphin that has long lived in Hong Kong waters. By examining its teeth, skull, skin, subcutaneous fat, liver, kidney, stomach and reproduction organs, researchers can find more valuable information about its living habits (by Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department)
5. A baby White Dolphin learns to swim with its mother. About one metre long at birth and weighing 10 or more kg, an adult dolphin can grow to 2.8 metres and over 200 kg



on the way

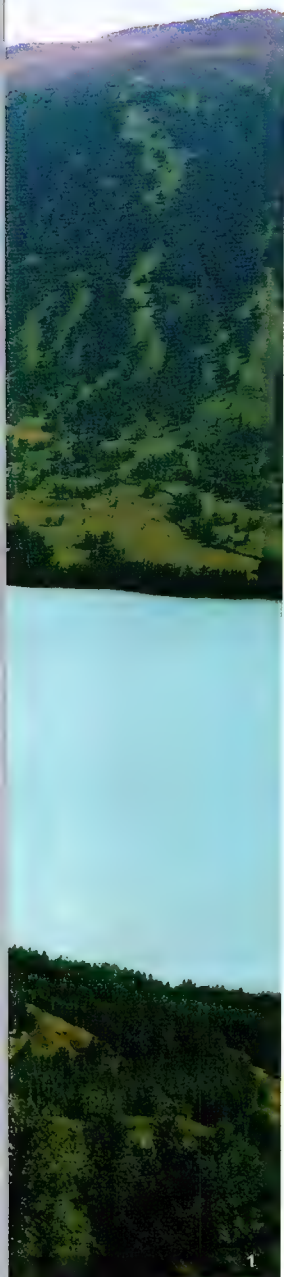


The Silk Road Revisited — After 20 Years

Photos & article by Ma Yiu Chun



Ten years ago, I wrote a story for this magazine entitled "Revisiting the Silk Road — Ten Years of Change". It was about our journey there in 1992 and reunion with old friends. Ten years later, in 2002, we were on our way again. The difference this time was that we took our children with us. It gave us a warm feeling that the bond with our friends in the Northwest would extend to the next generation.



Now let's start from the very beginning. On September 6, 1982, seven young people who had longed to see the landscapes of China started their year-long journey across the Chinese mainland. Some of the members dropped out midway and others joined in, but I was the one who completed the entire route. It was an unforgettable experience, which helped us learn more about the mountains and waterways of our country and obtain a better understanding of its history, culture and various ethnic groups. At the same time, we made friends. On September 6, 1992, we revisited the Northwest, bringing our spouses. And we promised to make the same trip again 10 years later.

Travel When You're Young Or You'll Regret It

During the past 20 years, we had all been overloaded, struggling with families, careers, health and life. We once said that if we didn't set out to have wonderful travels when we were young, we would regret it later. Now we know how lucky we were to have done it. The memories will last forever.

It wasn't easy to arrange such a reunion involving several families. As it could only take place during the children's summer holidays, we decided to meet at Ürümqi on August 16 (not September 6 after school began).

I flew from Shenzhen to Ürümqi on August 16. Seeing the vast desert from the air again refreshed many of my old memories. Little (Xiao) Ai met us at the airport. I wonder whether I should still call her "Little Ai" as she was now a professor and the departmental head of a famous hospital of traditional Chinese medicine, and her daughter was a teenager in high school. Little Tang, another old friend whom I hadn't seen for 20 years, also



came to the airport. The first time we visited Ürümqi, it was deep in winter, Ürümqi was covered in snow and ice, and we could not find a place to stay; Little Ai and her brother helped us reach the Liyushan Hotel, where we got to know Little Tang and other girls who had come to Ürümqi to study. We did not see her on our last trip 10 years ago because she was out of town. This time, taking her son, she had come from Bole in western Xinjiang. Another girl, Little Qi, would be waiting for us in Burqin because she knew we were going to see Lake Kanas. Little Ai's brother had moved his family to Panyu in Guangdong Province. This was the first time he had come back to see his parents, so we got together too.

10-year Anniversary Party at Hongchun Yuan

That evening we got together at the Hongchun Yuan Restaurant.

Hongchun Yuan is an old restaurant name familiar to many travel buffs from Hong Kong. In the 1980s, when the Silk Road tour became a craze, it was the only Western restaurant in Ürümqi, or the whole of Xinjiang. Tourists who were not used to such local food as fried rice eaten with one's fingers and noodles cooked with mutton, could find coffee and steak or Western snacks in this restaurant. Now it was all history. Facing competition from the increasing numbers of star-rated hotels, Hongchun Yuan was restructuring itself. The Western restaurant was gone, leaving only a bakery offering Western cakes. Beside it was a new building housing a Chinese restaurant and hotel.

Not only Hongchun Yuan had changed, the whole city of Ürümqi had become unrecognizable. In the old days, the eight-storey Kunlun Hotel was the highest building in the city, and known as "Eight Storeys". Now there were many



1. Kanas Lake in northwestern Xinjiang has become a hot tourist destination
2. My story about the previous revisit carried in *China Tourism* Issue 154
3. The Friendship Peak witnesses our friendship that has extended to our next generation
4. Liyushan Hotel has become a hospital of traditional Chinese medicine
5. Ürümqi, the Beautiful Grazing Land, is the largest city in the Northwest



buildings of 20~30 storeys, and the northwestern city did not look much different from other big inland cities. To learn about the Uygur lifestyle and taste the western regional flavour, you have to go to Erdaoqiao (Second Bridge) in the city's south.

Destination Famous Scenic Spot

On the third day, we hired a medium-sized bus for our team, 17 all up including adults and children, and set off for Burqin, where we would meet Little Qi before continuing our trip to Lake Kanas. I remembered 10 years ago we wanted to go to the lake but had to give up the plan because the road was blocked by snow. This time, we were determined to see the most famous scenic area in Xinjiang.

To travel from Ürümqi to Burqin, you have to drive around Xinjiang's second largest basin, the Junggar Basin. We planned

to go along the basin's west rim, via Karamay and the Ghost City, and come back on its east side, passing the Five-Colour City and Flaming Mountain, the same 2,000 km route we took on our last trip. Our bus left Ürümqi for the west, soon joining the Ürümqi-Kuitun Highway. Many new highways have been built in recent years. However, while journey times have been much shortened, travel costs have risen. After passing Hutubi, we drove on to State Highway No. 222, and then State Highway No. 217. We should have had a smooth ride on these well-built roads but as some sections were under maintenance, we had to switch to the dusty side roads now and then which took longer. Around 3 p.m. we arrived in Karamay, the Petroleum City, halfway to Lake Kanas.

In August, daytime temperatures can reach 35 °C; even the air conditioning in the bus couldn't help us cool down. Fortunately, our children did not complain. The thing that did upset them was the roadside toilet, nothing more than two bricks. But this was the western region style, and they had to experience it.

A Fish Restaurant Meal in Burqin

The Ghost City is located in Urho, 100 km north of Karamay. When we were here 10 years ago, it was a no-man's-land and we were free to roam through the *yardang* landforms. Now they were encircled with



barbed wire and visitors had to pay to enter. From Burqin, the highway stretched straight north to meet the blue sky. When we reached Burqin at dusk, Little Qi was already waiting for us at a bridge marking the city's southern entrance. Later, we learned Qi's family had arranged a welcome meal for us at a fish restaurant.

I had a clear memory of the time at her home in Altay 10 years ago as we drank and dined, bidding each other farewell. Time had flown but Qi and her family remained as close to us. Having been working as an official for many years, the formerly elegant Little Qi looked like a superwoman now. We talked a lot and drank a lot that night.

We got up late the following day. After breakfast, we bought a whole sack of watermelons and Hami melons. It was a great pleasure to have melons to eat while travelling in the scorching summer season in Xinjiang.

Lake Kanas was another story. A decade ago, it was a place hidden deep in the mountains, little known to outsiders. Now it had become a scenic area as famous as Jiuzhaigou in Sichuan, a World Nature Heritage site. The increasing numbers of visitors brought pollution. On the lakeside, many hotels, restaurants and

yurts had been built. They were for the visitors' convenience but spoiled the natural environment, making the beautiful scenic area look like a messy village. The local authorities have now decided to make a change. Hotels and restaurants were being built on hillsides at Jiadengyu and the waterside buildings were all due to be removed. Lake Kanas will soon get back its original beauty.

The lake itself is gorgeous. In some ways, it looks like the scenery in the Canadian Rockies. The colour of the water changes between morning and evening, and in different seasons. If you look at photos of Wolong Bay taken in spring or autumn, you will find the lake water green. But what we saw was milky.

Climbing up the Fish-Watching Pavilion, the highest point at the lake, we saw its whole surface, long and narrow, laid out in front of us. In the distance, we could see Friendship Peak, the summit of the Altay Mountains, on the border

between China and Mongolia, Russia and Kazakhstan. It witnessed our 20-year-old friendship.

Disappointment at Lake Kanas

I hate to say it but the management of the Kanas Scenic Area is extremely bad, despite its high entry charge. We paid 100 yuan each, but when we asked the clerk if there were maps or brochures, she answered coldly, "No." For a speedboat cruise on the lake, we paid another 100 yuan each. It took some time for the boatman to find us life jackets. We were charged 40 yuan per person for taking a bus to the Fish-Watching Pavilion; and again, the conductor and driver treated us coldly. They checked our tickets several times on the way as though we were thieves. There was a big crowd waiting for the

bus going downhill, but the park authorities only agreed to send more buses after they were urged several times. When we finally saw a bus, there was such chaos we had to fight our way to get on. The next day, we visited the specimen museum. The guide worked as if she were an automaton, reciting her patter with a fixed expression and reluctant to answer any questions. We then

hired a horse to give the children a ride. But the animal was not properly broken in and one of our children was frightened. The horsemen simply stood by, watching the crying child on horseback, none of them coming over to help.

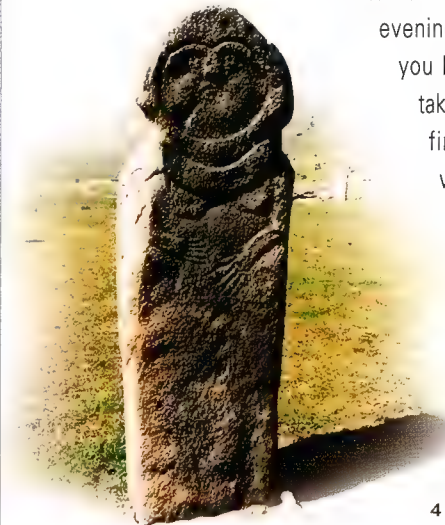
There were traffic jams on several sections on the way back to Burqin because of the road maintenance work. When we finally arrived, it was after 10 p.m. Little Qi suggested we have our supper at the night market opposite our hotel. Among all the kinds of local speciality snacks, barbecued fish was the most typical. The fish were caught in the unpolluted Burqin and Ertix Rivers, and one species called "dog fish" was the best for barbecuing. Served with red pepper powder spread on it, and accompanied by beer, it tasted simply delicious. I had five or six of these fish.

Old Russian Lady Brand Beer

An old lady of Russian origin sold homemade beer and yoghurt at the night market. They sold well owing to their unique flavours, so she branded them simply "Old Russian Lady". Most diners at the night



3



4

1. The imposing Tianshan Mountains
2. The Old Russian Lady has become famous on the night market for her homemade beer and yogurt
3. The water of Kanas Lake changes to different colours in different season
4. Stone carvings discovered in ancient Tujue people's cemetery

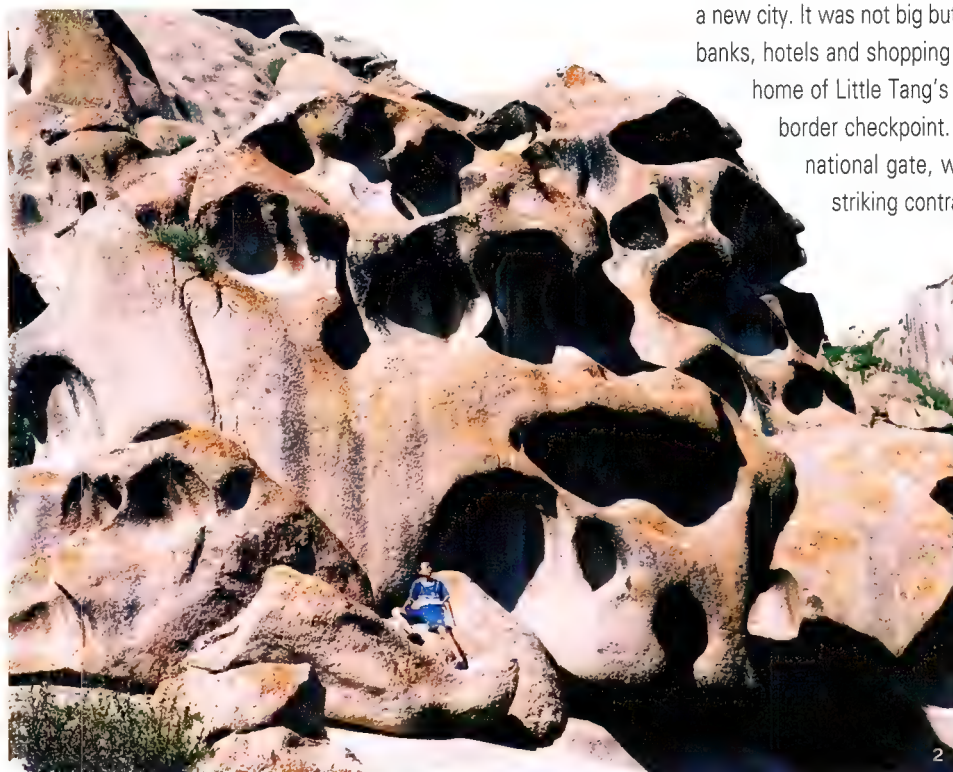
market bought her beer while her yoghurt attracted young travellers. I could tell she was a successful businesswoman when I saw her roaming through the stalls, selling her products and joking with her customers.

We left Burqin for Ürümqi the next day. Three days were obviously too short for our meeting with Little Qi whom we hadn't seen for 10 years. There could be another decade before our next reunion. When we said goodbye to each other again, even the strong-willed Little Qi wept.

It was getting increasingly hot and the temperature rose to 35 degrees. It was hard travelling in the Gobi desert. Thanks to our children who played with one another in the bus, singing songs, guessing riddles and telling jokes, our day was made so much easier. They confirmed for us that our friendship would continue among the younger generation. Around 8 p.m. we arrived in Ürümqi, where the gathering we had waited 10 years for would end. Together with Little Tang and her son, I was going to take a night train heading west to visit the Alataw Pass and Tang's home in Bole. Then we would continue our journey to Lake Sayram, Korgas and Yining, which I had missed during my last trip. The others in the group would fly back to Hong Kong the next day. I can't imagine how we will look when we meet again after another decade. Nevertheless, a man who can enjoy such sincere get-togethers in his life will have nothing else to yearn for.

Alataw Pass on the Sino-Kazakh Border

The prolonged farewell made us almost miss our train. We rushed to the railway station and caught it at the last minute. Alataw Pass is



the west Chinese exit of the Eurasian Bridge, the railroad running from Lianyungang in East China to Rotterdam in Holland. Beyond this pass lies the Kazakhstan Republic. We took a double-decker train. Though hard-seated, it was a great improvement on the train I took on the Chinese mainland 20 years earlier. Not only were the seats more comfortable and everybody had one, but the carriage was clean with no spitting or smoking. In the early morning, the train reached Bole, the government seat for the Bortala Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, where most of the passengers alighted. After running more than an hour around the largest salt lake in the region, Lake Aibi, the train arrived at its terminus, the Alataw Pass.

The pass between two mountains is a barren place, where the wind is strong and the winter terribly cold. I wanted to see it just because it is the first check point on the Eurasian Railway. Over the past years, as border trade flourished, Alataw Pass had developed into a new city. It was not big but was well equipped with such facilities as banks, hotels and shopping centres. We dropped our luggage at the home of Little Tang's friend and immediately hired a car to the border checkpoint. In less than 10 minutes, we reached the national gate, where the clerks were not busy at all—a striking contrast to the situation at Luohu, Shenzhen—

as there were very few travellers passing through this entry port. The Alataw Pass Port is mainly for cargo carried by the railway. Travellers who enter or exit this part of China usually choose the port at Korgas which is nearer to Alma-Ata, the largest city of Kazakhstan.

To know more about the mountain pass, we went several kilometres further to the soldiers' border post, set up on a terrace. It was an advantageous defensive position from where the railway station in the Kazakhstan town was

clearly in sight. Visitors could borrow the soldiers' telescopes to have an even better view. Though the border post was not formally open to tourists, taxi drivers could always manage to persuade the guards to open the door.

Lake Sayram, under the jurisdiction of Bole City, is famous worldwide but the city itself is not well known. I came to Bole mainly to visit Tang's family. I found it bigger than I had expected, but it is a prefecture's government seat, after all. From Alataw we first went to visit the Strange Stone Gully north of Bole. In a gully about a dozen kilometres long, strangely shaped granite boulders were spread everywhere. Even weirder were the holes of various shapes and different sizes on each of the stones. They are a result of weathering, with rainwater washing away some of the elements in the stone. Sadly, because of its

remote location, the Strange Stone Gully is little known. The good side was there was no entry charge; all we needed to pay was a small fee for road maintenance.



1. Lake Sayram, in Bole City

The following day we visited the county town of Wenquan (Hot Springs), whose name comes from the hot springs there. In the afternoon, I said good-bye to Little Tang and continued my journey west to Lake Sayram. After riding for two hours, a blue lake appeared on the right of the highway. The driver told me it was Sayram and I should get off at the next station, Songmutou (Pine Wood). The car stopped and the door was opened. Before I could find my feet, more than a dozen people rushed up to me, asking if I needed a place to stay. It was a messy situation. I chose to stay in a single yurt and got it at a discounted, off-season rate.

I had been looking forward to Lake Sayram for a long time. I had seen pictures of clear water and blue sky, with herdsman grazing their sheep on a lakeside meadow dotted with bright flowers. It should be a wonderland cherished by everyone. But reality was different. When I approached the lakeside, a huge troop of men and horses came up to me, offering to photograph me on horseback. I rejected them absolutely: "No. I want to enjoy the scenery in peace." But they would not go away, one after another asking the same question. I realized there would be no peace for me unless I rented a car and drove to the other side of the lake. My heart ached even more when I saw the

messy stalls set by the lake and people washing clothes in the water. I couldn't help feeling sad for the lake. Is it inevitable that an open scenic area will be polluted? I found it difficult to stay any longer, so left ahead of schedule for my next destination, Korgas.

Tireless Senior Travellers

As I was looking for a car, I encountered other travellers who also wanted to go to Korgas, Huiyuan and Yining. One was a man in his 70s from Beijing; the other two were teachers from

Lanzhou. I admired their courage and determination to make such a trip at their advanced ages. We decided to go together to save money. We boarded a van and reached Qingshui (Clear Water) River via Guozigou (Fruit Gully). After getting our border travel permits, we changed to a minibus driving to the entry port at Korgas. Also on the Sino-Kazakhstan border, Korgas is much



more prosperous than Alataw. There was a rather big international market in front of the national gate. Among the commodities on sale in the market were Russian military watches, telescopes, old-fashioned cameras and fur coats imported from Kazakhstan. There were also Chinese light-industry products such as cotton clothes. Many traders from both sides travel across the border daily.

We visited the border area taking our luggage with us because we were en route to Huiyuan and would then look for a place for the night in Yining. We all travelled light. I had a pull-up and the elderly man from Beijing had only a half-filled plastic hold-all with red, white and blue stripes. The charge for climbing the watchtower was 10 yuan per person, which my three companions considered too expensive. So they waited for me at the restaurant while I climbed up to get a

1. Alataw, the mountain pass on the border between China and Kazakhstan
2. The jagged stones in the Strange Stone Gully in Bole
3. Tourists to Yining should not miss watching the sunset on the Yili River
4. The Sayram Lake is a charming place if there were no peddlers and their voices of hawking
5. The 75-old-man Mr. Li has travelled for several months by himself

panoramic view across the border, leaving my luggage at the entrance. By paying another 10 yuan, I also got a guide to take me to the border marker established at the head of the bridge on the River Korgas, from where I was allowed to take photos of the other side. The market economy was really flourishing at this border-trade centre, I realized.

A Long-held Desire Fulfilled in Yining

After lingering for over an hour on the border, we took a pedicab to the bus station, where we got on a medium-sized bus driving to Yining. We got off the bus at the junction for Huiyuan, and again hired a pedicab. Within five minutes we were at the Bell Tower in downtown Huiyuan. When I saw a photo of the tower many years ago, I wondered how a structure in the central plains' style came to be in the remote western region. Now I learned it was an imitation of the Drum Tower in Beijing. The city of Huiyuan was divided into two parts, old and new. The old city was destroyed during the Russian invasion of Yili in the Tongzhi reign of the Qing Dynasty (1644—1911). When a later emperor, Guangxu, recovered Yili, he ordered a new city built north of the old one. The highest commander of the Qing military forces in Xinjiang was stationed in Huiyuan, and his former residence, which currently housed the PLA barracks, was about 100 metres from the Bell Tower. There was not much to see in the general's quarters as a massive renovation was going on. But it gave us a chance to get absorbed in the past and made our trip worthwhile.

We then hired a taxi to Yining from the Bell Tower, costing us 10 yuan each. Two decades ago, after visiting Künes and Bayanbulak, I had travelled west heading for Yining. But at that time, the city was not open to tourists and the soldiers stopped us at



Xinyuan, 100 km from Yining. I guess many people are like me; the more difficult a place is to get to, the more you want to try. This time I made it here. Once in Yining, however, I found it not as interesting as I had hoped and little different from other cities. Nevertheless, I watched the sunset from the Yili River Bridge, fulfilling a long-held dream.

Now it was time to begin my return route. It takes more than 10 hours by bus on the bumpy road from Yining to Ürümqi. Just the thought of it scared me. So I flew, though it was expensive. I was no longer a young backpacker, after all. I made a brief stop in Ürümqi, saying

good-bye to Little Ai and her family, and took a train to Dunhuang. I can't remember how many times I have visited the Mogao Grottoes, but every time I travel in the northwest I must go to Dunhuang to visit the "art gallery" at the foot of Mt. Sanwei. I like the atmosphere there. In the vast Gobi, many nameless artists of different dynasties worked painstakingly to dig out these caves and create gorgeous paintings and sculpture portraying the Buddha and telling Buddhist stories. After 1,000 years there emerged the Dunhuang School, comprising painting, sculpture, architecture, archaeology, religion, history, philosophy and literature.

A hundred years ago, a naive monk sold priceless relics of paintings, calligraphy works, wooden sculptures and textiles to a foreign explorer for a very low price, leaving Dunhuang with an irreplaceable loss. It is useless to blame the monk; if we do want to apportion blame, it should focus on the impotence of the government and the malfeasance of local officials. It is a pity that more than 50,000 precious cultural relics are still scattered overseas.

The Humming Sand Dunes: A Camel Market?

I revisited the Humming Sand Dunes too. At the entrance, over 100 camels were waiting for hire. The tumult of the people and their animals, plus the smell of camel droppings, made the scenic spot look like a camel market. Some people were shouting through loudspeakers to invite tourists to take their vehicles to the Yueya



(Crescent Moon) Spring.... Could anyone hear the humming of the sand dunes in such a noise? A beautiful picture of camels walking in the desert became a luxury even to think about it. It was even worse by the Crescent Moon Spring, where people had dug an ugly man-made lake, spoiling the harmony of the natural environment. It was another example of the harm done by over-development of a scenic spot.

Another place I had to go to in the Northwest was Jiayuguan, because there I had a good friend of 22 years standing, Old (Lao) Yu. In 1980, when I climbed the gate tower at Jiayuguan Pass for the first time, I suddenly felt unwell. It was Yu and another friend, Old Zhao, who sent me to the Jiuquan Iron & Steel Works Hospital. Jiayuguan Pass



had not changed much, except a tourist area had been developed around the gate tower. But remarkable changes had taken place in the city of Jiayuguan, where the buildings had become higher and the stone vase, a sculpture set in the centre downtown, had been replaced by a modern metal work. The department store was still there but had a new glass facade. The city had also built two new parks, Lake Yingbin and Xiongguan Square, both larger than Hong Kong's Victoria Park. Yu told me the city by night now looked as beautiful as Hong Kong. I could sense his pride and I agreed with him after seeing the lights. Xiongguan Square includes several themed zones for recreational activities, entertainment, performances and education all in one park. Victoria Park is just not in the same league.

To conjure up old memories, Yu and I revisited Jiuquan. Its Drum Tower looked the same, and the park and its general urban area had not changed either. The Jiuquan Hotel, however, had moved out of the

area around Drum Tower.

According to my original plan, I should take a train from Jiayuguan to Xi'an and then fly to Shenzhen. Old Yu thought I would have problems travelling in Xi'an without a guide. So he contacted his wife's sister, Ms. Kuang, who had a family in Xi'an. The Kuang sisters looked like each other, so I recognized her as soon as I walked out of the railway station. She had also brought a friend of hers to serve as my driver and guide. In the next three days, the two of them put their own businesses aside to accompany me. Thanks to their hospitality, I had a wonderful time in Xi'an, roaming through the historical sites from the Qin (221—207 B.C.) to the Tang (618—907) dynasties and tasting various dishes of delicious food. Their warmth made me reluctant to leave this historical city marked with thousands of years of Chinese history.

Translated by Gloria Shang

Postscript

September 5, 2002. I left Xi'an for Hong Kong, ending the nostalgia tour I had been anticipating for 10 years. The next day, I began a new life-rejoining China Tourism Press. For me, tourism not only means travelling, eating and enjoying recreational activities, it's the footprints of the first half of my life.

1. The steep Great Wall in the north of Jiayuguan Pass
2. The downtown of Jiayuguan city is much more modern nowadays
3. The Old Yu couple possess the forthright characteristic of the Northwest people
4. Ancient literary atmosphere prevails in Xi'an's Stone Tablet Forest
5. The terracotta soldiers and horses in Xi'an

Culture a Special Ingredient

Six Noted Ethnic Restaurants in Beijing

Photos by Li Youxiang Article by Zhao Yu, Li Youxiang

If you still believe Beijing delicacies are limited to *Jiaozi* and roast duck, you're completely wrong. In the past few years, the arrival of a series of restaurants with distinctive regional cuisines have brightened the Beijing food scene. They serve a variety of special dishes from different areas, such as Kangba tender beef from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, whole roast lamb from Inner Mongolia, the Hakka people's perch wrapped in silver paper, and sour soup fish from Guizhou. Who can deny Beijing's reputation as "a haven for diners"?

Gesar is a Tibetan epic longer than those written by the ancient Greek poet Homer. I was very interested to learn Beijing has a restaurant and bar named after King Gesar.

Reflecting the Religious and the Homely

Set among many modern bars, the two-storey Gesar Restaurant has a unique look.



In the evening, Tibetan songs and dances are performed

A strong Tibetan atmosphere attracts lots of foreigners



LHASA REVISITED — Gesar Tibetan Restaurant



In a relaxed and uniquely Tibetan-style environment customers sample delicacies from the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau while drinking and chatting

The first floor displays Tibetan monastery architecture, with an emphasis on religious solemnity. The second floor represents a typical Tibetan house, simple, unsophisticated and welcoming.

Gyatso, the manager, introduced the restaurant's menu to us in his Tibetan-accented Mandarin. As the southern Tibet region borders India, most dishes are prepared with curry; the Kangba region is close to Sichuan, so most foods are spicy;

while the dishes from the Amdo region taste similar to those of the central parts.

He says the set meal is suitable for a host entertaining a large number of friends and relatives, while the wedding set meal provides main dishes served at Tibetan wedding ceremonies, and can also help customers understand Tibetan ways.

He gave a brief rundown on wine and liquor, such as Tibetan beer, home-brewed *qingke* barley wine and Tibetan Ganhong and Ganbai wine. I felt tipsy just listening to these names.

Aromatic buttered tea made the restaurant warm in the depth of winter, and songs about wine and mandolin music from the Amdo region brought distant places and times closer.

Add: 14 Liangma Rd E, Chaoyang Dist., Beijing
Tel: (10) 6436 1167



All decorations on the wall are from Tibet

A LOVE STORY WITH A TIBETAN FLAVOUR

Makye Ame Tibetan Restaurant



The restaurant is permeated with a warm Tibetan cultural atmosphere

Tibetans are familiar with the Makye Ame Restaurant in Barkhor Street, Lhasa; but for those people who have never there, the Makye Ame Restaurant in Beijing will make you feel very close to Tibet.

Drawn from a Romantic Encounter

Almost all travellers to Tibet have visited the small yellow building on the southeastern corner of Barkhor Street. The Makye Ame Restaurant is well known among tourists. Legend has it that Tsangyang Gyatso, the Sixth Dalai Lama of Tibet, met a Tibetan girl who was as beautiful as the moon in this yellow building. Tsangyang Gyatso fell in love with her and wrote a poem to express his feelings. Later the poem was read and



Tibetan songs and dances are performed every evening

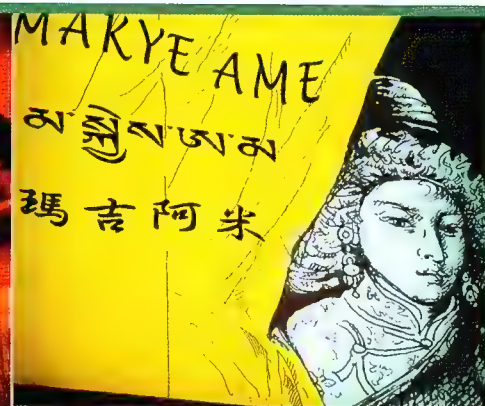
admired by people all over Tibet. The owner named this restaurant and bar Makye Ame to commemorate this encounter and later opened another one in Beijing.

The Makye Ame Restaurant in Beijing is located on a quiet street. I climbed a circular staircase and pushing open a heavy wooden door, was met with a strong fragrance of butter. There were dim Tibetan-style paper lamps, Mani piles, ancient red copper prayer wheels, prayer trumpets, and girls and young



Kangba Hanzi — roasted mutton chops

Add : Second floor of Bar Street (on the northern side of the Friendship Store), Xiushui Nanjie, Jianguomenwai, Beijing
Tel: (10) 6506 9616
E-mail: makyeame@sohu.com



The name Makye Ame derives from the romantic story of a famous wine shop in Barkhor Street, Lhasa

men in Tibetan costume going back and forth. Open the menu... Kangba Hanzi roasted mutton chops, Tibetan Roasted Natural Mushrooms, Authentic Soup of Amdo, Kangba Tender Beef, Eight-treasure Salad with Butter and All-grass Monarchid Herminium, and Yoghurt and Glutinous Rice Balls...

The Delicious "Kangba Hanzi"

Kangba Hanzi (also known as Grassland Roasted Mutton Chops) are mutton chops roasted in a special Tibetan sauce prepared according to a secret recipe, and coloured golden yellow. The mutton was very delicious, with tender meat and crisp skin, and almost every table had ordered Kangba Hanzi.

Exclusive to Makye Ame, Tibetan Roasted Natural Mushrooms is a dish created by the boss drawing on his childhood memories. Prepared with natural mushrooms and special seasonings, it features smooth and tender mushrooms that are strongly seasoned. Bala Bani probably has its origins in Nepal. The milk bean curd is decorated with a Buddhist pattern drawn with spinach gravy. The dish not only gave me a taste of the delicious food of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, but also an appreciation of ancient Tibetan culture.

"Bala Bani" originated in Nepal



UNFORGETTABLE SUPPER

Ahfanti's Hometown Music Restaurant

Business is booming at Beijing's Ahfanti Restaurant. Mention of the restaurant's name makes people automatically associate it with the Uygur ethnic group in Xinjiang.

Full of Uygur Ethnic Flavour

The restaurant has a simple auditorium-style design, with a post and panel structure and typical Uygur decor. The walls are covered with large Xinjiang oil paintings, photos and ornaments. I was told that every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, nearly 100 potential customers are turned away because there are no seats for them.

Delicacies and Hot Dance

The Ahfanti Restaurant menu offers more than 100 different dishes, including Lemon Roasted Beef, Roasted Sheep's Leg, and Sesame Seeds Mutton. "Hot Ahfanti" is a special dish wrapped in silver paper. It was served to us still flaming in the tray. Even before diners begin to eat, this special dish thoroughly warms up the atmosphere.

When all the customers were concentrated on eating, the song and dance performances began. A slim, graceful hostess announced items in both Chinese and English. The hand drum performance featuring changeable rhythms was very



Both the waiters and dishes feature a Xinjiang flavour

appealing. The music of the Rewapu (a five-stringed musical instrument of the Uygurs) was clear, melodious and sweet. Some performers sang Uygur folk songs while playing musical instruments; most were love songs — simple, unadorned and humorous. And bold and unrestrained Uygur folk dances won bursts of warm applause. Finally the performers invited all customers who had eaten their fill on to the stage to dance. As the stage was small, some diners had to stand on the tables to dance to their heart's content. As the evening's performance reached a climax, I understood why some people call the Ahfanti Restaurant heaven in the hutongs.

Ahfanti Restaurant (Xinjiang Restaurant)
 (Dong Cheng)
 Tel: (86) 4517 0906
 (Xinjiang Restaurant, Beijing, China)
 www.ahfanti.com

"Nang" cake is the most typical Xinjiang food



All customers are attracted by the hot Xinjiang dancing



The restaurant's private rooms are also in the Xinjiang style

THE AUTHENTIC HAKKA RESTAURANT



The popular Perch Wrapped with Silver Paper costs 28 yuan

the window, I enjoyed views of quiet Lake Shichahai. No matter how the seasons change, customers in the restaurant are removed from the turmoil of the world outside.

Colour, Fragrance, Flavour All in One

When the perch wrapped in silver paper was served and unsealed, the dish gave off a strong fragrance. Decorated with red peppers and green coriander, the meat of the deep-fried fish is tender and delicious, complemented by the sour and sweet sauce.

Or try Sanbeiya (Three-cup Duck). Compared with Beijing Roast Duck that most Beijingers are familiar with, the Three-cup Duck, which is not greasy, has more tender meat. The Steamed Tender Vegetables with Lotus Leaves underneath appealed because of their green colour. The previously served salty dishes blended well with these green vegetables.

Having eaten and drunk my fill, I sipped good-quality scented tea while enjoying the melodious Guangdong music. Though night had fallen and the darkness twinkled with the lights of myriad households, the business of the restaurant had just started.

Add : Rear door of Beihai Park on the eastern bank of Lake Shichahai, Beijing
Tel : (10) 6404 2259



Most customers at the Hakka Restaurant are Beijing "white collar" workers, plus tourists from Hong Kong, Macao and other countries

Delicious, smooth and tender Hakka Fermented Bean Curd costs 22 yuan a portion

At the rear of the imperial garden, Shichahai used to be a place where many of the emperors' relatives had their houses. But now it seems numerous special restaurants and bars have sprung up like mushrooms overnight in Shichahai. The best place to taste Hakka cuisine is at the Hakka Restaurant on the eastern bank of Lake Shichahai. "Our restaurant is furnished in a unique style and provides delicious food. So we have many regular customers," Miss Chen, the restaurant's manager, told us with pride.

Hakka Feel in the Heart of the City

From the outside, the restaurant is an

ordinary small building built with a post and panel structure. But push open the door of this time-honoured courtyard and you'll find red brick walls and heavy wooden beams. The decor features unusual wooden lampshades, old wooden doors, folk paper-cuts, as well as various hand-drawn signs, displaying the high artistic taste of the designer. The plain square tables and chairs and the blue and white crockery reflect the simple and unsophisticated aesthetic sense of the Hakkas. Everything in the restaurant is natural and amiable.

Taking a seat by

Salted Chicken is one of its famous dishes, 28 yuan for half a chicken





Meticulously carved copper kettle with milk tea

A SUMPTUOUS MEAL FROM THE GRASSLAND

Darkhan Mongolian Cultural Restaurant



Beautifully dressed Mongolian girls welcome customers at the door

A good example of the many restaurants combining culture with cuisine that have sprung up recently in Beijing, is the Darkhan Mongolian Cultural Restaurant located in Xiushui Nanjie .

In the Mongolian language, "Darkhan" means sacred, or a term of respect for a prince. All those who have been to Inner Mongolia know that the Horqin Grassland is one of the most beautiful places in the region, well watered and with fertile soil. In the history of Inner Mongolia, Horqin tended to produce outstanding people. Three generations of Darkhan were born in Horqin, Empress Xiaozhuang who played an important role in the Qing Dynasty grew up on there, and Garda Meilin, a national hero in the hearts of the Mongolian people, was also the son of the Horqin Grassland. Of course, the owner of this

Mongolian restaurant and bar is also from the Horqin Grassland.

Ancient Territory of Inner Mongolia as Decoration

Welcomed by a girl in a typical Mongolian costume, I found myself in a yurt furnished to treat guests to fancy foods. Decorated in cloud patterns with white as the main colour, the restaurant displays a bold and unrestrained style and simple aesthetic standards. The "hana" woven with willow twigs and oxen tendons made me feel I really was in a yurt.

The most attractive feature was the map of the Mongolian Empire on the wall drawn on a whole cattlehide, which records how the Mongolian people on horseback, under the leadership of Genghis Khan, crossed Asia and came to Eurasia. This cattlehide gave customers a link with the ethnic group of the grasslands, so well known for their staunch



The map of the former Mongolian Empire is drawn on a whole cattlehide

and brave conduct.

We drank milk tea and wine from the grasslands in this exclusive cultural ambience, ate whole roast lamb, and enjoyed melodious regional music.

Whole Roast Lamb and Milk Tea

Preparing a whole roast lamb is in itself something of a major project, and eating it is no simple affair either. A ceremony is held before customers start on the roast lamb.

After the lamb wrapped in red silk is



"Matouqin" and large riding boots

placed on the table, the host sings songs to warmly welcome guests and then presents them with Khatag (a piece of silk used as a greeting gift). Then the host cuts the roast lamb, and gives choice morsels from the shoulder to the most honoured guest. Someone eating the dish for the first time may be confused by over a dozen different sized knives, and will not easily master the proper usage of each knife. The complicated procedure is no less formal than a grand French banquet.

Milk tea is a daily drink for Mongolian people requiring six or seven stages of preparation. First, fry rice, then add diced fat from a sheep's tail to the rice and continue frying until the rice is brown. Add butter to the fried rice. Crush some brick tea, boil it until it is infused, then pour some fried rice into the tea. Add some milk and stew the tea until it is ready. Milk tea prepared this way has its own unique aroma. Mongolians serve tea to their honoured guests in silver bowls. Legend has it that Genghis Khan, a proud son of heaven, died from poisoning and Mongolian people believe silver can reveal if the tea is poisonous. They also serve tea to guests in silver bowls to show their respect.

Long ago, Genghis Khan led his cavalry to conquer a vast expanse of Chinese territory on a diet of dried beef soaked in milk tea.



"Mutton Eaten with Fingers" is a must in the restaurant

Add : 11 Jia, Xiushui Nanjie, Jianguomenwai,
Beijing
Tel : (10) 6501 7740

ZUISANJIANG — SPICY DELIGHTS

The Zuisanjiang Restaurant, which serves Guizhou cuisine, is located at the end of a bar street in South Sanlitun.

Surprises in the Pot

As Guizhou has a humid climate, the locals like to eat spicy food. When natives of Guizhou get together, they drink wine and eat simply prepared red peppers without any other dishes.

The Zuisanjiang Restaurant serves a wide variety of dishes. One of the main ones is Dry Pot, which differs from Hot Pot. Hot Pot requires a pot of hot soup. Customers instantly boil raw vegetables, strips of mutton and other meat in a steaming pot, and season them by dipping in a bowl of rich sauce. Dry Pot is also cooked on a stove. When eating meat and vegetables from the pot, diners should stir them constantly. When most of the meat and vegetables in the pot are eaten, add water, vegetables and seasonings to the pot to make soup. Customers usually like to cook spicy chicken and mutton with soy sauce in the dry pot.



Peppers are the most important ingredients of Dry Pot. No whole peppers are used, but a secret recipe makes this dish extremely pungent and spicy. Firstly, pound peppers, garlic, ginger and other seasonings, then stir-fry the mixture with the main ingredients, and put them all into a dry pot on

a stove. As customers stir-fry the food, the taste becomes stronger and spicier. Vegetables are also added to the pot to regulate the flavour.

Braised Soybeans and Chicken prepared in a dry pot is a main course Guizhou mountain people offer when welcoming guests. In the past the people living in the mountains were very poor but hospitable. They could not afford to treat guests to a wide variety of foods but eventually they created this dish, Braised Soybeans and Chicken. Guests can help themselves to small soybeans from the dish to pass the time while chatting. Many customers who have sampled Braised Soybeans and Chicken praise the soybeans. The reason is simple; after being stewed together with the chicken for quite a long time, the soybeans are tasty, spicy and aromatic.

Sour Soup Fish Good for Stomach

Another famous dish at the Zuisanjiang Restaurant is Sour Soup Fish. Guizhou people prepare sour soup with a special plant instead

of vinegar. Taking this sour soup helps soothe the stomach rather than upset the digestion. As soon as the soup boils, customers will find the fish flesh very delicious and tender, but if cooked overlong it becomes too soft. Before eating the fish, one should dip it in

sauce prepared with seasonings and sour soup.

Translated by Kuang Peihua

Add : 14 Dongdaqiao Xiejie, Chaoyangmen (To
the south of Sanlitun Nanjie)
Tel : (10) 6509 3704



AN ECONOMIC BUDGET — THE YOUTH HOSTELS IN CHINA

Photos & article by Dianna

When going for DIY trips in my younger days, I had to take care of everything including dining, accommodation, and transportation, by myself. Hence, I have known Youth Hostelling International (YHI) very early. Having registered as its member, one can lodge at its member hostels of YHI all over the world at very low fees. It helped me to save a large amount of accommodation fees as well as make acquaintance with people from different places in the world. Sometimes, I could make good friends and I was accompanied on the

way. It is undoubtedly a more direct way to taste the fun of DIY travelling.

In the past, youth hostels were only found in overseas countries. However, since the first international youth hostel was opened in East China's Guangdong Province in 1998, DIY travel has become popular through the mainland. Nowadays, many youth hostels can be easily found in cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xi'an, Kunming, Lijiang, Hangzhou, and Dalian, etc. Most of them are conveniently built in city centres or scenic spots.

About Youth Hostelling International

The first youth hostel was born in 1912 based on the suggestion of Richard Schirrmann, a German teacher. Based on the theme of "Safe, economic, hygiene, privacy", the hostel was simply equipped with high-stilt beds, hard sleepers, blankets, personal lockers, small tables and chairs, public bathing rooms, and lavatories. Some also provide self-help restaurants and public activity rooms which are widely welcomed by youngsters.

In 1932, the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) was officially established. As a member of the UNESCO with its head office built in Britain, it is a non profit-making organisation. Today, IYHF has already become the world's largest chain hotels in the world.

The YHI was first introduced to Guangdong in China in 1998. The Guangdong Youth Hostel Association is a sister organisation of the IYHF.



► **Logo:** An international road instruction sign of a blue triangle with a fir and a house inside.

► **Size:** Over 5,000 hostels spreading in 60-plus countries in the world.

► **Registration:** Hong Kong residents may register the membership by visiting the following address — Rm 225-227, Block 19, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon (Tel: 852-27883105; Website: www.yha.org.hk). Annual fees: Teenagers (aged from 5-17) HK\$ 50; Adults (aged 18 or over) HK\$ 110. Permanent membership fees: HK\$ 1,000.

Mainland residents can download the application form from the website: www.byecity.com/hostelling/ or www.yhachina.com, or go to any of the youth hostels to register the membership. Annual fees: 70 yuan.

In fact, anyone can lodge at youth hostels in the mainland. The only difference is non-members may have to pay a little bit higher fees.

► Relevant websites:

Homepage of IYHF: www.iyhf.org/home_gb.html (English)

www.byecity.com/hostelling/ (Chinese)

IYHF China's website: www.yhachina.com (English/ Chinese)

Website of Hong Kong YHA: www.yha.org.hk (English/ Chinese)

BEIJING



BEIJING FAR EAST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Features: Conveniently located in a downtown *hutong* (lane), the hostel appears like a Chinese traditional rectangular courtyard.

Add: 113 Tieshuxiejie, Xuanwu District, Beijing

Tel: (10) 63018811 **Fax:** (10) 63018811

Rates: 45~60 yuan/ person/ day (4 or more beds room)

Facilities: Self-help kitchen, restaurants, laundry, reading room, Internet bar, 68 beds

Transport: Take the subway to Hepingmen (Peace Gate) Station. Walk along Xinhua Road for about 10 minutes

BEIJING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 10/F, Building 2 of International Hotel, 9 Jianguomennei Dajie, Beijing

Tel: (10) 65126688-6145 **Fax:** (10) 65229494

Rates: 50~80 yuan/ person/ day (2~8 beds room)

Facilities: Central air-con, reading room, Internet bar, self-help laundry, public telephones and lavatories, 122 beds

BEIJING SAGA YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 9 Shijia Hutong, Nanxiaojie, Dongcheng District., Beijing

Tel: (10) 65249098 **Fax:** (10) 65272773

Rates: 50~80 yuan/ person/ day (4~6 beds room/ room of 2~3 beds with toilet)

Facilities: Air-con, Internet bar, self-help laundries, public lavatories

BEIJING ZHAOLONG INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 2 Gongti Beilu, Chaoyang District, Beijing

Tel: (10) 65972299-6111 **Fax:** (10) 65972288

Rates: 50 yuan/ person/ day (2 or more beds room)

Facilities: Central air-con, public telephones, self-help kitchen and laundry, reading room, entertainment room, bicycle hiring, Internet bar, 140 beds

BEIJING FENGLONG INT'L YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 5 You'anmen Dongjie, Xuanwu District, Beijing

Tel: (10) 63545836 **Fax:** (10) 63536446

Rates: 60~100 yuan/ person/ day (several beds room)

Facilities: Self-help laundry, bicycle hiring, Internet bar, travelling consultancy

BEIJING EAST CHENGUANG INT'L YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: B4 Dongpeilou Building, Oriental Plaza, 8-16 Santiao, Dongdan, Dongcheng District, Beijing

Tel: (10) 65284347 **Fax:** (10) 5284350

Rates: 50~80 yuan/ person/ day (1~3 beds room)

Facilities: Central air-con, self-help laundry and kitchen, reading room, bar, 103 beds

HAINAN

SANYA RED CORAL INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Villa District, of Xinhua News Agency, Luling Road, Dadonghai, Sanya, Hainan

Tel: (898) 88213665 **Fax:** (898) 882112887

Rates: 75 yuan/ person/ day (twin-bed room)

Facilities: Air-con, colour TV, 24-hour hot water, 36 standard guestroom, arrangements for diving and rock-climbing

SHANGHAI

SHANGHAI PUJIANG INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

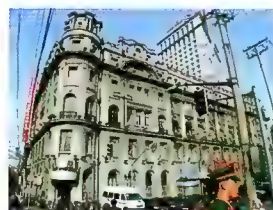
Add: 15 Huangpu Road, Shanghai, inside Shanghai Pujiang Hotel

Tel: (21) 63246388

Fax: (21) 63243179

Rates: 55~140 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, TV, self-help kitchen and laundry, conference room, ticket booking, bar, 150 beds



SHANGHAI CAPTAIN YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 37 Fuzhou Road, Shanghai

Tel: (21) 63235053 **Fax:** (21) 63219331

Rates: 45~165 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)

Facilities: Self-help kitchen and laundry, public telephones, Internet bar, restaurant, 125 beds

LIAONING

DALIAN SEA RHYME YOUTH HOSTEL

Features: This unique hostel was actually transformed from a warship on July 11, 2001. Guests can join a programme called "One Day Seaman", which provides morning exercises, war training, military drill, flag communication, and radar navigation.

Add: On the warship at the harbour, Laohutan (Tiger Beach) Scenic Area, Dalian, Liaoning

Liaoning

Tel: (411) 2394026 **Fax:** (411) 2394400

Rates: 20~80 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds cabins)

Facilities: Bar, reading room, entertainment room, navy museum, 116 beds

Transport the railway: Take bus 2 or 4 from Train Station, get off at Laohutan stop



DALIAN HUANAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 1 Yingchun Road, Xigang District, Dalian, Liaoning
Tel: (411) 2496830 **Fax:** (411) 2494665
Rates: 50~160 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)
Facilities: Air-con, reading room, left-luggage service, restaurant, bicycle hiring

SHAANXI

XI'AN ACADEMY YOUTH HOSTEL

Feature: Located by the South Gate Wall of Xi'an city, it is built in courtyard-style of the Qing Dynasty with tranquil atmosphere. The bell tower, drum tower, the Forest of Steles, ancient city wall, gate of south city wall, ancient culture street, Great Mosque, Muslims snack street, antique street, commercial street are nearby the hostel.



Add: 2 Jia Xishunchengxiang, Dananmennei, Xi'an, Shaanxi
Tel: (29) 7287721 **Fax:** (29) 07287720
Rates: 50~70 yuan/ person/ day (2~4 beds room)
Facilities: Self-help laundry, public bathing rooms/ lavatories, reading room, restaurant, Internet, bar, 140 beds
Transport: Take bus No. 603 from train station and get off at Nanmen (South Gate). Or first take a bus from the airport to Xi'an; then take bus No. 405, 223, or 302 to Nanmen.

XI'AN FENGHE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

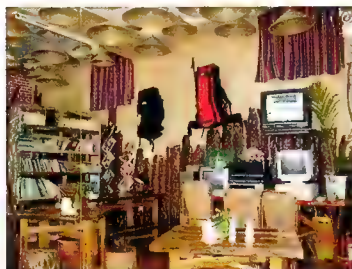
Add: 11 Fenghe Road, Xi'an, Shaanxi
Tel: (29) 6240349 **Fax:** (29) 6240349
Rates: 35~60 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)
Facilities: Air-con, TV, self-help laundry, Internet bar, left-luggage service, restaurant

YUNNAN

LIJIANG OLD TOWN YOUTH HOSTEL

Features: Built on Yangrenjie (Foreigner Street) in Lijiang, the hostel was altered from a local Naxi nationality residence with courts inside and streams outside. On the top floor, tourists can overlook the ancient city and the far-away Yulong Snow-capped Mountain.

Add: 44 Mishixiang, Xinyijie, Dayan Town, Lijiang, Yunnan
Tel: (888) 5102345 **Fax:** (888) 5129610
Rates: 15~30 yuan/ person/ day (2~12 beds room)
Facilities: Al fresco bar, self-help laundry, fast-food shop, Internet bar, chess and



reading room, bicycle hiring, photography club, public telephones, 108 beds

Transport: Since the vehicles are not allowed to enter the ancient Lijiang city, tourists have to first take a taxi or a bus to Xinyijie then walk about 300 metres to the hostel in the city.

KUNMING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Block C, Zhengxie Hotel, 94 Cuihu Road South, Kunming, Yunnan
Tel / Fax: (871) 5167131
Rates: 25~35 yuan/ person/ day (2~6 beds room)
Facilities: TV room, snack counter, public telephones (IDD), self-help laundry and kitchen, reading room, chess & cards room, Internet bar, bar, tennis court, 218 beds

KUNMING CAMELLIA YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 96 Dongfeng Road East, Kunming, Yunnan
Tel: (871) 3163000 **Fax:** (871) 3147033
Rates: 30~45 yuan/ person/ day (2~4 beds room)
Facilities: Self-help laundry and kitchen, Internet bar, bar, snooker room

KUNMING HUMP INN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Bijifang Commercial Centre, Jinma, Kunming, Yunnan
Tel: (871) 3644197 **Fax:** (871) 3644192
Rates: 20 yuan/ person/ day
Facilities: Bar, laundry, Internet bar, self-help laundry, 100 beds

DALI OLD TOWN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 181 Boai Road, Dali Ancient City, Yunnan
Tel: (872) 2662418 **Fax:** (872) 2662418
Rates: 15~70 yuan/ person/ day (1 or more beds room)
Facilities: Restaurant, self-help kitchen and laundry, Internet bar, reading room, left-luggage service, change currency



GUANGDONG

GUANGDONG INTERNATIONAL SPORTS YOUTH HOSTEL



Features: The hostel is equipped with various sport facilities such as courts for playing football, tennis, beach volleyball, golf, gym, swimming pool, grass-sliding ground, field operation club, horse riding, and cross-country vehicle ground, etc.

Add: Sankang Town (inside Qingxin Mineral Hot Spring Tourist Area), Qingxin County, Qingyuan, Guangdong
Tel: (763) 5862622 **Fax:** (763) 5826706
Rates: 45~129 yuan/ person/ day (2~14 beds room)
Facilities: Air-con, 50-plus hot spring pool, 30-plus international standard football courses, grass-sliding court, sports park, cafe, Internet bar, convenience store, self-help laundry, clinic, telecommunication centre, IDD
Transport: There are shuttle buses from Qingyuan City Bus Terminus every 10 minutes

GUANGZHOU CITY YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Guangdong Travel Mansion, 179 Huanshi Road West, Guangzhou, Guangdong
Tel: (20) 86666889-3813 **Fax:** (20) 86679787
Rates: 50 yuan/ person/ day (1 or more beds room)
Facilities: Air-con, bar, self-help laundry, restaurant, IDD, 81 beds

NANHAI XIQIAOSHAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Inside Yunyingqiong Building, Xiqiaoshan, Nanhai, Guangdong

Tel: (757) 6886799 **Fax:** (757) 6889689

Rates: 30 yuan/ person/ day (several beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, TV, reading room, dance hall, ping-pong ball room, basketball court, 64 beds

SHENZHEN HAPPY VALLEY INT'L YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Huanlegu, Overseas Chinese City, Nanshan District, Shenzhen, Guangdong

Tel: (755) 6949443 **Fax:** (755) 6901309

Rates: 50~85 yuan/ person/ day (2~12 beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, ping-pong ball room, library, gym, dance hall, Internet bar, chess & cards room, snack counter, self-help laundry and kitchen, multi-function hall, 302 beds (including "space ship" unique bed)



ZHUHAI INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Inside Zhuhai Tourist Villa, Shihuashan, Zhuhai, Guangdong

Tel: (756) 3332038 **Fax:** (756) 333311

Rates: 50 yuan/ person/ day (6 beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, TV, swimming pool (10 yuan/ time), self-help laundry, restaurant, reading room, 124 beds, shuttle bus

FOSHAN PEARL RIVER INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 5/F, Pearl River Hotel, 1 Chongren Road, Foshan, Guangdong

Tel: (757) 2221624 **Fax:** (757) 2292263

Rates: 53 yuan/ person/ day (several beds room)

Facilities: Bar, TV room, IDD, ticket office, self-help laundry, chess & cards room, reading room, 48 beds

ZHAOQING DINGHUSHAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Dinghushan, Zhaoqing, Guangdong

Tel: (758) 2621668 **Fax:** (758) 2621665

Rates: 38 yuan/ person/ day (4~14 beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, swimming pool, ping-pong ball room, chess & cards room, teaching room, teenagers training base, 90 beds

ZHAOQING QIXINGYAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Qixingyan, Zhaoqing, Guangdong

Tel: (758) 2226668 **Fax:** (758) 2224155

Rates: 35 yuan/ person/ day

Facilities: Air-con, TV, skating ground, tent-camping zone, barbeque zone, skating ground, chess & cards room, badminton courts, restaurant, 168 beds



JIANGMEN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 86 Changti Road Central, Jiangmen, Guangdong

Tel: (750) 3683908 **Fax:** (750) 3681908

Rates: 30~140 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)

Facilities: Internet bar, self-help restaurant and laundry, public telephones, snack counter, 200 beds

GUANGXI

GUILIN INT'L YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 46 Binjiang Road, Guilin, Guangxi

Tel: (773) 2819936 **Fax:** (773) 2827116

Rates: 35~200 yuan/ person/ day (1~4 beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, TV, self-help laundry, Internet bar, ticket office, bicycle hiring, public lavatories, 129 beds



YANGSHUO INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 102 Yangshuo Xijie, Guilin, Guangxi

Tel: (773) 8820933 **Fax:** (773) 8820988

Rates: 40~125 yuan/ person/ day (2~more beds room)

Facilities: Air-con, TV, reading room, public telephones, self-help laundry and kitchen

SICHUAN

CHENGDU FORESTRY INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL



Add: 6 Renmin Road North, Chengdu, Sichuan

Tel: (28) 83416580 **Fax:** (28) 83364547

Rates: 20~60 yuan/ person/ day (1~more beds room)

Facilities: Restaurant, Internet bar, air-con, left-luggage service, travel consultancy

HENAN

LUOYANG MINGYUAN YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 20 Jiefang Road, Xigong District, Luoyang, Henan

Tel: (379) 3192297 **Fax:** (379) 3194668

Rates: 40~60 yuan/ person/ day (2~6 beds room)

Facilities: Restaurant, TV hall, reading room, air-con, left-luggage service, bicycle hiring

JIANGSU

NANJING ZHONGSHANLING INTERNATIONAL YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: 7 Shixiang Road, Nanjing, Jiangsu

Tel: (25) 4446688 **Fax:** (25) 4446458

HONG KONG

HONG KONG MT. DAVIS YOUTH HOSTEL

Add: Mt. Davis Path, Hong Kong

Rates: HK\$ 30/ person/ day (2~6 beds room)

Facilities: Self-help kitchen, barbeque, view-watching platform

Transport: There is a shuttle bus reaching the hostel at the Shun Tak Centre in Sheung Wan on Hong Kong Island. Fare: HK\$ 10. Tourists can take bus No. 5A in Admiralty or mini-bus No. 54 at the Central Hong Kong ferry pier to the hostel.

Relevant website: www.yha.org.hk



CHENGDU AND XILING RIDGE

Photos & article by Lee Shun Yan



Du Fu (712—770), a great poet, was forced to flee to Chengdu during the An Shi Insurrection in the Tang Dynasty.

In ancient times, it was extremely difficult to get to Sichuan. So when a war broke out, many people fled there. As long as you made it to Sichuan, you could feel safe for soldiers would not take the trouble to go there.

When Du Fu arrived in Chengdu, he built a thatched hut with three rooms. Life was peaceful but joyless. Or he would not have written that famous poem *My Thatched Hut Wrecked by the Autumn Wind*.

The poet was not successful in his official career and led a meagre life. Like many renowned figures in history, he became famous after his death. Because of his four-year stay in Sichuan, his residence and the places in Sichuan he wrote about have all become sites of historical interest. Today, "Du Fu's Thatched Hut" is a hot spot for tourists. The little hut has been much enlarged. It is set among 30 *mu* (two hectares) of land, with a stream spanned by small bridges and many clumps of thick bamboos and pine trees. They were in fact planted and built by Du Fu's admirers from later generations, though it was genuinely the place he once lived in. Anyway, Du Fu's Thatched Hut is a must-see for

anyone who comes to Chengdu. Apart from commemorating this great poet, people like to see the tranquil residential garden.

Du Fu wrote in one of his poems: "A window frame of heavy snow over Xiling Ridge". For that line, I set off from Chengdu and drove for two hours to Xiling.

The snow-clad mountain covers a large area and is about 1,000 metres above sea level. There is a holiday resort where one can ski on grass in summer and on snow in winter. It was autumn and precipices were covered with row upon row of golden leafed trees. There were four hotels with red roofs and white walls, similar in architecture to those in Europe. But the restaurants provided food like seasoned meat in Sichuan style, black bear meat, etc. The temperature was 10 degrees lower than in Chengdu. I felt rather chilly. But after a meal of piping hot Sichuan chili food I felt warm and comfortable.

A 40-minute cable car ride brought me to a place as high as 3,200 metres above sea level. From there, I climbed further up along a path of stone steps. Ten minutes later, I got to the Sun and Moon Belvedere (Ri Yue Ping) standing 3,250 metres above sea level.



The first snow of the year happened to fall that day. White patches began to appear on the mountains. I was told if it had been a fine day, I could have seen the Four Maidens Mountain and the Golden Summit of Mt. Emei, or even the strange

scenery of Yin Yang Jie (Border of Hell and the Human World). Unfortunately, there was heavy fog and I could see no more than five metres. Mountains and forest were all enveloped in fog. I did not even know how high I had climbed. Weather in those mountains was unpredictable. I drank a cup of tea in a small wooden hut at the Sun and Moon Belvedere, waiting for the fog to clear. But after a while, the local guide said as the fog had not dispersed by then, it would remain till the next day. I had to go back to Hong Kong the next day. I had no alternative but to retrace my steps along the snow-covered path leading to the cable car station. Though I was unable to see the landscape, I saw the snowy Xiling Ridge after all. Du Fu had only seen it through his window but I was actually on the snowy ridge. Wasn't I more fortunate than he?



THE SOUL OF A MOUNTAIN

Article by Zhao Lihong

Zhangjiajie is a world of mountains. I could see them through every window of the hotel where I stayed in Wulingyuan.

It was when I walked along the Jinbian (Golden Whip) Stream that I had a chance to look at the mountains closely. The stream wound through various valleys along a range of mountains. The clear water flowed down merrily from the high hills, free and unrestrained, tossing up sparkling beads towards the shoes of tourists. Whenever I felt tired, I stopped to enjoy the scenery around me. Each time I took a break, I saw a different mountain scene. When they were far in the distance, they appeared so graceful and serene. Now when they towered in front of me, they were huge and imposing. They seemed to be watching me from above, giving me the impression they might fall and crash down on me any minute. I felt so small and powerless. Their unique and fantastic shapes surprised me the most, each one triggering my endless imagination. Nature was so mighty and mysterious. Like human beings, each mountain had its own appearance and personality.

Actually it is meaningless to say that a mountain resembles something else. Different people have different imaginations, besides a mountain looks different from different angles. Take the "Double Jade Bamboo Shoots" for example. In the eyes of country folk, the two peaks appear like bamboo shoots. But to city dwellers, they are more like a pair of towering pagodas. Some literati might describe them as two Chinese brushes. Another example is the Jinbian Peak. In the eyes of people today who know little about weapons of ancient times, the Jinbian Peak looks like a tower block. Its shape is very similar to the Jinmao Tower at Lujiazui in Shanghai. Those huge rocks had once been reefs submerged deep in the sea and rose to be high peaks during cataclysmic changes in the earth's crust. These giants have stood there for millions of years, watching the changes of nature, the ups and downs of the human world. Cracks on them seemed to have been cut by an axe, yet looked like the wrinkles of an old man. Hidden deep in their minds might be the most profound and complex pondering. Who could tell their innermost thoughts?

When I bent my head to look at the racing water, I saw the reflections of the mountains. Mountains were quivering in water and water was flowing over mountains. Both came to life, with mountains, water and human being merging to make a special moment.

A new lift was available deep in the mountains by which one could go straight to the summit. It was a unique experience to see mountains in the distance from an observation lift. The sheer cliffs opposite rose abruptly and sharply with little space between them. They reminded me of a line of robust men standing side by side. They wore different

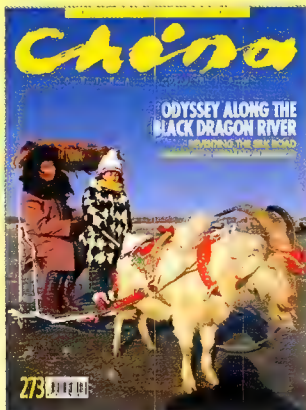
caps, strong and awe-inspiring. They seemed to be pushing and shoving, each holding fast his own position. When I had looked up at them from their feet, I had only seen clouds lacing their shoulders and was unable to get a clear picture of their heads.

Once at the summit, I had a panoramic view of the mountains around me. At a place called "Spellbinding Terrace" (Mihuntai), I was amazed by what was in front of me. Amidst the billowing clouds, mountains appeared one moment and disappeared the next. They resembled myriad islands in a rolling sea, or a fleet of ships sailing in surging water. The shapes of all those mountaintops were so bizarre — they looked like a pillar, a bamboo shoot, a monkey, an immortal, an elderly firewood collector... Those strange rocks reminded me of sailors climbing to the top of masts and looking ahead in the wind across an infinite sea.

I guessed that those mountains must have souls. Like all lives on earth, they were born, grew up and matured, and had their own thoughts. If they had memories, they must have remembered the days when they were fondled by currents in deep seas and dashed upon by ocean waves, and encircled by shoals of fish. Maybe, for the time being, they were musing over their remote past.



by Dianna Lau



Readership Survey

China Tourism always appreciates feedback from its readers. In accordance with your suggestions, we have recently added a variety of new columns. Still, we need to know more of your opinions, including criticisms and suggestions. Please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Thank you!

Please give your evaluation of the stories in this issue and your overall impression of *China Tourism*.

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
An Odyssey Following the Heilongjiang	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Past & Present of Qingdao's Old Buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In Search of Old Roofed Bridges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Silk Road Revisited — After 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Six Noted Ethnic Restaurants in Beijing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Photographs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tips for the Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Opinions: _____					

Name: (Mr./Ms./Mrs.) _____

Address: _____

Country: _____

Age: _____ Occupation: _____ Number of trips to China in the last 5 years: _____

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☐ Subscription ☐ Newsstand or bookstore

☐ Hotel Name: _____ ☐ Others _____

Main purpose for reading *China Tourism*?

☐ Planning trips ☐ General interest in China's customs, scenery, etc. ☐ Business

☐ Tourist Trade purposes ☐ Others _____

What do you like most about *China Tourism*?

Are you happy with the factual content of *China Tourism*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. It provides us with invaluable feedback which will help us improve *China Tourism* magazine for you.

*Please mail this questionnaire to our office at 24/F, Westlands Centre, 20 Westlands Road, Quarry Bay, Hong Kong, or fax to (852) 2561 8196.

A PRIL



Mid-Apr. ~ Oct.

The 23rd day of the third lunar month and the ninth day of the ninth lunar month are held to be the birthday and death day of Sea-Goddess Mazu (or Tianhou) respectively. On the days during the **Fujian Goddess Mazu Festival** tens of thousands of Mazu followers will come and pay respect to Mazu, both from Taiwan and Fujian in mainland China. Mazu who was born in 960 is said to make her presence frequently to escort ships or save them from wreck. Visitors can also enjoy folk songs and dances or taste Fujian cuisine.

April 4

Legend has it that the Li people living by the Changhua River in Hainan Province perished during a major flood. Only a brother by the name of Tianfei and his younger sister, Guanyin survived. Guanyin later on decided to marry her brother on the 3rd day of the 3rd lunar month, and thus the Li people thrived once again. Gradually this evolved into the **Valentine's Day of the Lis** during which young people of the Li communities mingle and scout for suitable lovers.

13~15 / 4

Regarded as the new year of the Dai people living in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, the three-day **Water Splashing Festival** involves a series of celebrating activities such as dragon boat races, the firing of indigenous missiles, dances to the accompaniment of the beating of drums on a pedestal shaped like an elephant's legs, peacock dances, sightseeing, country fairs, and water splashing. During the festival pouches are tossed between unmarried men and women as tokens of love.



20~25 / 4

The **20th Weifang Kite Festival** is expected to attract 100,000 kite enthusiasts from home and abroad. A large-scale of art performances, kite contests, and recreational activities will be held during the festival. At the same time, an annual trade fair and the third Shouguang International Vegetable Exhibition will be held. The Shandong city has hosted 19 international kite festivals since 1984, and has been drawing increasing foreign investment while showcasing its kits to overseas visitors.

26~30 / 4

The **China (Lecong) International Furniture Fair** is expected to create a platform for the exchange of furniture designing, technologies, and the global market information, and in the end to help hone the competitive edge of China's furniture industry in the world market. The fair is jointly sponsored by the China Chamber of Commerce for Import & Export of Light Industrial Products and Handicraft, the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade's Guangdong branch and the Shunde City Government.

15~25 / 4

Luoyang began the cultivation of the peony 1,400 years ago, and over 350 varieties are grown there today. During the **Luoyang Peony Festival**, visitors may view flowers, visit exhibitions of lanterns, paintings, calligraphy and photographs, and take part in symposiums and business talks. At the Wangcheng Park and the Botanical Garden, banquets are arranged for peony admirers, where they can enjoy all kinds of well-served snacks and refreshments.



April

The **Yangzhou Paper-cut Festival** held in Yangzhou in East China's Jiangsu Province will have four sections displaying the Yangzhou paper-cut style and local paper-cut artists will perform at the scene. As one of the earliest areas where the art of paper-cutting became popular, Yangzhou has a long history which can be dated back to Sui Dynasty (581—618). It is said Yangzhou styles of paper cuts have more than 1,000 varieties.



Hotels in Heilongjiang

City	Name	Star	Address	Tel	Fax
Harbin	Singapore Hotel	*****	68 Ganshui Rd, Xiangfang Dist., Harbin	(451) 2336888	(451) 2333720
	Heilongjiang Kunlun Hotel	****	8 Tielu St, Nangang Dist., Harbin	(451) 3606688	(451) 3600888
	Holiday Inn City Centre	****	90 Jingwei St, Daoli Dist., Harbin	(451) 4226666	(451) 4221661
	New World Bei Fong Hotel	****	403 Huayuan St, Nangang Dist., Harbin	(451) 3628888	(451) 3622828
	Harbin Nationality Hotel	***	111 Friendship Rd, Daoli Dist., Harbin	(451) 4674338	(451) 4674468
	Hong Kong Hotel	***	149 Nantong Avenue, Nangang Dist., Harbin	(451) 2530000	(451) 2537788
	Hong Kong Palace Hotel	***	210 Shangzhi St, Daoli Dist., Harbin	(451) 4691388	(451) 4610894
	Kong Fu Conifer Hotel	***	88 Heqing St, Dali Dist., Harbin	(451) 4836888	(451) 4831888
	Overseas Chinese Hotel	***	72 Hongjun St, Harbin	(451) 3641491	(451) 3672930
	Songhua Jiang Gloria Inn Hotel	***	257 Central Boulevard, Daoli Dist., Harbin	(451) 4638855	(451) 4638533
	The Harbin Flamingo Hotel	***	118 Minsheng Rd, Dongli Dist., Harbin	(451) 2603677	(451) 2657028
Heihe	International Hotel Heihe	***	48 Wangsu St, Heihe	(456) 8227027	(456) 8227043
Jiamusi	Jiangtian Guest House Jiamusi	**	1 North Sect., Zhongshan Rd, Jiamusi	(454) 240441	
	Jiamusi Guest House (North Bldg)	*	Guangfu Rd, Qianjin Dist., Jiamusi	(454) 226971	
	Jiamusi Nongken Mansion	**	Heping Rd, Jiamusi	(454) 226554	(454) 322929
Mudanjiang	Fangchan Hotel Mudanjiang	**	Seven Star St, Mudanjiang	(453) 223308	(453) 233130
	Mudanjiang Beishan Guest House	**	Xinhua Rd, Mudanjiang		
	Mudanjiang Guest House	**	Guanghua Rd, Yangming Dist., Mudanjiang	(453) 265633	
	Mudanjiang Jingbohu Guest House	**	Jingbohu Tourist Dist., Mudanjiang		
	Mudanjiang Merchandise Mansion	**	1 Xichang'an St, Mudanjiang	(453) 226701	
Qiqihar	Hecheng Guest House	**	4 Wenhua St, Qiqihar	(452) 2475836	
	Hubin Hotel Qiqihar	**	4 Wenhua St, Qiqihar	(452) 2713121	
	Qiqihar Longjiang Hotel	*	57 Longhua Rd, Qiqihar	(452) 2127981	
	Qiqihar Nenjiang Guest House	*	7 Fengheng Rd, Longsha Dist., Qiqihar	(452) 472686	
Yichun	Dailing Guest House	*	Binbei St, Dailing Dist., Yichun	(458) 3432412	
	Langxiang Guest House	*	Tieli County, Yichun	(458) 2585674	
	Taoshanzhuang Guest House	*	Taoshan Dist., Yichun	(458) 405977	(458) 87183
	Yichun Guest House	*	Yichun Dist., Yichun	(458) 3605004	(458) 3606014

Flights to and from Harbin

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Harbin	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1750	1930	CA1622
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0800	0940	CA1604
	1 3 6	1420	1600	CA1612
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1300	1440	CA1624
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1050	1225	CJ6202
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1550	1720	CJ6204
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2040	2220	CJ6206
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1700	1840	CJ6208
	12345670710	0850	CJ6210	
	12345671850	2040	CJ6212	
	12345671145	1330	CJ6218	
	12345670940	1125	XW 128	
	12345670745	0925	XW 828	
Harbin — Beijing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2020	2205	CA1621
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1040	1220	CA1603
	1 3 6	1700	1850	CA1611
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1520	1710	CA1623
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0800	0945	CJ6201
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1300	1450	CJ6203
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1800	1950	CJ6205
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1420	1610	CJ6207
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1940	2130	CJ6209
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1000	1150	CJ6211
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0920	1100	CJ6217
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1205	1350	XW 127
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2030	2215	XW 827
Guangzhou — Harbin	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0830	1350	CZ3604
	3	1055	1625	SZ4666
	6	1050	1625	SZ4666
	3 7	0800	1310	SZ4634
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1530	2050	CJ6362
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1355	1740	CJ6262
Harbin — Guangzhou	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1440	2000	CZ3603
	3	1705	2230	SZ4665
	6	1705	2225	SZ4665
	3 7	1355	1930	SZ4633
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0900	1435	CJ6361
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0840	1250	CJ6261
Hangzhou — Harbin	1 5	1920	2220	CJ6948
	3 7	1750	2155	CJ6952
	3 6	1350	1740	F65818
	1 4	1350	1730	F65968
Harbin — Hangzhou	1 5	0830	1145	CJ6947
	3 7	0830	1255	CJ6951
	3 6	1830	2215	F65817

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Kunming — Harbin	1 4	1820	2215	F65967
	3 4 7	0755	1310	3Q4652
	2 6	1615	2135	CJ6944
	1 5	1610	2220	CJ6948
Harbin — Kunming	3 4	1350	1950	3Q4651
	7	1350	2000	3Q4651
	2 6	0935	1525	CJ6943
	1 5	0830	1525	CJ6947
Shanghai (Pudong) — Harbin	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2020	2300	MU5608
	2 6	1250	1650	CJ6244
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1835	2115	CJ6252
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1140	1430	CJ6258
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0900	1140	FM 652
	1 2 4 5 6 7	1425	1700	FM 654
Harbin — Shanghai (Pudong)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0700	0940	MU5607
	2 6	0815	1210	CJ6243
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1510	1750	CJ6251
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0810	1050	CJ6257
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1220	1500	FM 651
	1 2 4 5 6 7	1750	2040	FM 653
Shenyang — Harbin	2 4 6	1540	1640	CZ3662
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2040	2140	CJ6310
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2010	2100	CJ6966
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1640	1805	CJ6968
	1 2 4 6	1010	1110	ZZ 608
	3 5 7	1435	1540	ZZ 608
Harbin — Shenyang	2 4 6	1720	1820	CZ3661
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0925	1030	CJ6309
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1830	1920	CJ6965
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1200	1320	CJ6967
	1 2 4 6	1805	1900	ZZ 607
	3 5 7	1610	1710	ZZ 607
Wenzhou — Harbin	2 4 6	0930	1300	CJ6376
	1 4 7	1650	2110	CJ6958
	2 5	1140	1450	ZH 864
Harbin — Wenzhou	2 4 6	0700	1020	CJ6375
	1 4 7	0820	1240	CJ6957
	2 5	1540	1835	ZH 863
Wuhan — Harbin	2 3 5 7	0810	1215	CZ3642
	4 7	0745	1210	WU 516
	2 5	0750	1200	WU 604
Harbin — Wuhan	2 3 5 7	1255	1705	CZ3641
	4 7	1305	1715	WU 515
	2 5	1250	1705	WU 603

Flights to and from Mudanjiang/ Qiqihar

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
Beijing — Mudanjiang	1 4 7	1240	1440	CJ6214
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	0740	0935	XW 104
Mudanjiang — Beijing	1 4 7	1550	1810	CJ6213

Route	Days	Dep.	Arr.	Flight
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	2025	2220	XW 103
Beijing — Qiqihar	2 6	1240	1440	CJ6216
Qiqihar — Beijing	2 6	1550	1810	CJ6215

Airline codes:

CA = Air China
F6 = CNAC-Zhejiang Airlines
XW = China Xinhua Airlines

CJ = China Northern Airlines
MU = China Eastern Airlines
ZZ = Chang'an Airlines

CZ = China Southern Airlines
SZ = China Southwest Airlines
3Q = Yunnan Airlines

FM = Shanghai Airlines
WH = China Northwest Airlines

* For reference only.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ISSUE No. 274

Feature Story:

Along the Coast in Liaoning Province

Heading north from Huludao Island, a coastal city in western Liaoning Province, to Dandong, travellers can appreciate the varying landscapes of such places as Jinzhou, Panjin, Yingkou, and Dalian. On Huludao Island, you can visit the Jiumenkou Great Wall, recently added to UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List. At Jinzhou, you can see the Bijiasan Bridge which is covered by the sea at high tide, or Fengguo Temple—the most magnificent building of its kind in Northeast China dating from the Liao Dynasty (916—1125). But to experience a metropolitan atmosphere, you shouldn't miss the beautiful coastal city of Dalian, where exotic modern and time-honoured architecture mix. The coastal journey is perfectly rounded off by visiting Dandong, a city just opposite Sinuiju in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



Profile: Chau Wing Kit

A well-known traveller and anchorman for television travel programmes in Hong Kong, Mr. Chau has actively promoted DIY tourism since the 1980s. He is one of the founders of the Hong Kong International Travellers Association. After visiting more than 150 countries, he has decided to stay in New Zealand. Today, he shares his travel and life experiences with us.



Discoveries: A Glimpse of the Tunbao People

For 600 years, the Tunbao people of the central Guizhou Plateau have kept their distinctive lifestyle, language and traditions. Living in ancient forts or stone villages, their great achievements after expelling the indigenous people during the Ming Dynasty rewrote the history of Guizhou Province.

Nature: The Eternal Spirit of Environmental Protection

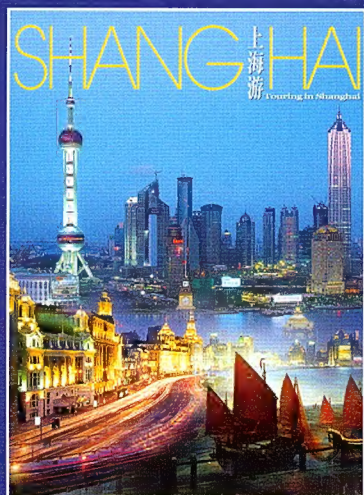
Late last year, a 21-year-old environmentalist sacrificed his life in the uninhabited lands of Hoh Xil in Qinghai Province, becoming the first person to die for the cause of environmental protection in China. Despite the tough and uninviting conditions on the highlands rising 4,500 metres above sea level, there are still thousands of volunteers every year willing to dedicate their lives to working at the Suonan Dajie Conservation Station. They all have a strong determination to protect endangered wildlife and rally world attention to the environment. Our writer visited the conservation station and shares his adventures with you.



Excursions: Monuments Trail in Macao

In 2002, Macao successfully registered 12 places on the route from Mazu Temple to the lighthouse on Guia Hill as World Heritage Sites. Tourists can easily walk this trail and enjoy all its scenic attractions. The temples, mansions, churches, theatres and canyons along the way mirror Macao's culture and history over more than 400 years.

BEST SELLER



Shanghai

has evolved at an unprecedented speed for decades into the biggest commercial city in China and one of the great metropolises of the world. Favourably located at the mouth of the Yangtse River, Shanghai has a long history and a rich culture. Commercial tower blocks and traditional buildings exude their individual charms simultaneously in the Pudong District, where hundreds of buildings in different styles, old or new, are collectively known as the Exposition of World Architecture. A kaleidoscope of entertainments and festivals of Old Shanghai attracts scores of entrepreneurs and travellers alike. "Touring in Shanghai" takes you deeper into this vibrant city

through spectacular photography, along with outlines for more than 10 different kinds of tours including a shopping tour, popular tourist sights, cultural excursions, and more. Practical information summarises accommodations, transport and dining options, and tourist maps are also included. "Touring in Shanghai" is the latest, most comprehensive travel pictorial of Shanghai available in Hong Kong.



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JIN JIANG HOTEL

where Shanghai's past and future are ever present.



At the heart of Shanghai, sits the stately Jin Jiang Hotel. Here, venerable European buildings surround a lush, wooded garden, and house some of the most modern facilities available in Shanghai. The hotel is proud to have received about 300 state leaders and government heads since its opening. Its incomparably attentive service has won high praise from guests from both home and abroad. The Cathay Building of Jin Jiang Hotel which was built in 1926, integrates the traditional classic Gothic style. In 1999, the Cathay Building was renovated into a five-star hotel. It takes on once again an elegant look and combines the traditional classic style with up-to-date facilities.

Jin Jiang Grand Hall witnessed numerous historic events including the birth of the "Sino-American Joint Communique" in February 1972. After rebuilding, the new Jin Jiang Grand Hall is ready to provide simply the best service and hospitality with the state-of-the-art facilities.

Jin Jiang's food has a history dating back to the 1930's and its Sichuan and Cantonese cuisine has become perfected after more than a half-century of experience.

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